

Twist and quirm
Michael Thompson-Noel

HAWKS
&
HANDSAWS



Russian crossroads
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Britain's unions
Can John Monks lead them back from the margin?
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DIVISION

FINANCIAL TIMES

Europe's Business Newspaper

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6 1993

DBS23A

Boost for AT&T in bid for share of UK telecoms market

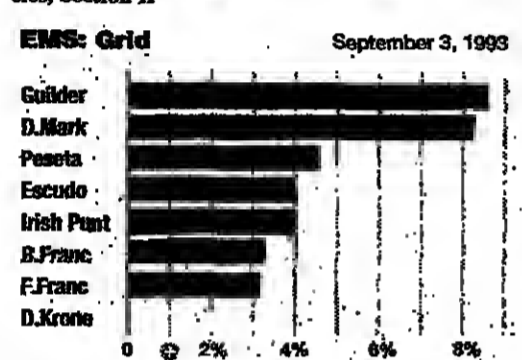
Ofel, the UK telecommunications regulator, has given the strongest signal yet that American Telephone & Telegraph will be allowed to compete with British Telecom in the £15bn-a-year UK telecommunications market.

Ofel has invited AT&T to a seminar next month called to discuss the terms on which competitors should be allowed access to BT's network. Page 12

US investors turn to Europe: US investors who helped drive the London stock market to new peaks are turning their attention to other European bourses, threatening to undermine the UK equity market's recent rally. Page 12

Romanians' short-cut to riches: More than 2m Romanians have sunk cash into a scheme in the Transylvanian town of Cluj which takes minimum deposits of Lei20,000 (£23) with a promise to pay back eight times the amount in three months. Page 12

European Monetary System: The Belgian franc was the dominant feature of the European exchange rate mechanism last week. It started the week third from bottom of the system, separated by 4.25 percentage points from the weakest currency, the Danish krone. By the close on Friday, it had fallen to second from bottom, only 2.50 percentage points separating it from the Danish currency. The grid's currencies are diverging in general: some 8.71 percentage points separate the weakest and strongest, with the permitted divergence being 15 per cent. Economics Notebook, Page 13; Further rises for D-Mark, Page 2; Currencies, Section II



The chart shows the number currencies of the exchange rate mechanism measured against the weakest currency in the system. After the reform of the exchange rate mechanism on August 2, 1993, one member currency can rise against another by as much as 15 percentage points in the system's grid. The exception is the divergence between the D-Mark and the Dutch guilder, which remain tied to each other in a 2.25 per cent band.

Merck: The US's biggest drugs company, has run into a setback in its planned \$6bn takeover of Medco Containment Services, the country's largest mail-order drugs distributor, after the Federal Trade Commission indicated that it planned to scrutinise the deal more closely. Page 13

Reed Elsevier: International publishing and information group, has finally realised its planned purchase of Official Airline Guides, paying \$417m in cash for the airline schedules and hotels information group. Page 14

Volvo: Sweden's centre-right government agreed to a full merger between the country's premier manufacturing company, and Renault, the state-controlled French car and truckmaker due to be privatised shortly. Page 18; Observer, Page 11

Toronto SE launches index: The Toronto Stock Exchange is to launch on October 1 an index of 100 most actively traded stocks, designed to help institutional investors measure Canadian equity performance more accurately. Page 16

US widens Iraqi arms probe: The Clinton administration is moving ahead with a broadened investigation of the US role in Iraq's arms procurement network and has not ruled out the possibility of naming a special prosecutor. Page 5

Iraqi PM sacked: Iraqi prime minister Mohammed Hamza al-Zubaidi has been replaced by finance minister Ahmed Hussein Khudayir, who will retain the finance portfolio.

Union leader looks to US: John Monks, who this week became general secretary of the UK's Trades Union Congress, wants to draw on lessons from the US labour movement in his efforts to reverse the trend of declining union membership. Page 6

Major faces test on taxes: UK prime minister John Major was last night facing a new test of his leadership as the Tory right stepped up its efforts to head off possible tax increases in the November Budget. Page 6

California plans ballot change: California plans to hold its presidential primary ballot earlier in the year, giving it greater impact on the shape of future US elections. Page 5

Japan to set lower interest rates: The Bank of Japan is on the verge of reducing official interest rates in an attempt to stimulate an ailing economy and restore consumer and corporate confidence, bank sources say. Page 5

Paris seeks employment pact: The French government is to invite employers and trade unions to agree on the flexible working of shorter hours in an attempt to reduce the country's record 11.7 per cent unemployment rate. Page 2

Mile mark lowered: Algerian Noureddine Morelli broke the eight-year-old world mile record held by Steve Cram of the UK with a time of three minutes 44.39 seconds at a meeting in Rieti, Italy.

Palestinian officials warn internal PLO agreement may take weeks

Israel confident on peace deal

By Andrew Gowers and Julian O'Sullivan in Jerusalem and Mark Nicholson in London

ISRAELI said yesterday that it was on course to conclude deals by next week on recognising the Palestine Liberation Organisation and on Palestinian self-rule, despite continuing haggling over the terms governing recognition.

Israeli ministers were united after yesterday's cabinet meeting in proclaiming that the sole remaining obstacles to signing the two agreements were matters of wording, not principle - in particular the wording of a statement to be issued by the PLO dissociating itself from terrorism and disavowing significant parts of its founding charter.

As a measure of mounting confidence within Israel over the prospects of a real peace breakthrough, stock prices on the Tel Aviv exchange rose to a record high yesterday, with the Mish-tanin share index rising 10 points to close at 226.76.

However, Palestinian officials in Washington cautioned that it could take weeks for the PLO to push the outline agreement through its internal decision-making bodies. "The [PLO] executive committee is meeting Thursday, after that the central council. It is going to take some time," said one official.

Israeli and US officials have both expressed the hope that the "declaration of principles" governing early autonomy in the Gaza and Jericho and covering Palestinian empowerment elsewhere in the West Bank could be signed in Washington on September 13, at the end of the present round of peace talks.

Both sides are determined to sustain momentum behind the breakthrough agreement on limited self-rule for the Palestinians, unveiled more than a week ago after secret talks in Oslo.

Mr Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman, arrived yesterday in Damascus to win public support for the deal from President Hafez al-Assad, having at the weekend won open backing from the mainstream Fatah faction of the PLO and from King Hussein, the Jordanian ruler. The Syrian government has reserved comment on the deal, which has been sharply criticised in its official press.

However, Mr Arafat told reporters before flying from Cairo to Damascus: "We're on the verge of finalising this agreement."

Mr Arafat is also seeking to accommodate internal Palestinian opposition to the agreement, partly to expedite its approval by PLO decision-making bodies, and has sought a meeting with Mr George Habash, leader of the



Tens of thousands of Israelis crowded into Tel Aviv's central square at the weekend in a rally to back the government's peace efforts

hard-line Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

He is then expected to visit the Gulf, where he is likely to seek both political and financial backing for the agreement. Gulf foreign ministers convened in Riyadh yesterday to discuss the deal.

The Israeli government is equally determined not to see momentum lost. "No one has an alternative. It is impossible to go back. There is no going back," Mr Shimon Peres, foreign minister, told Israeli radio, echoing a statement made by Mr Arafat in his first-ever Israeli television interview on Saturday.

Mr Haim Ramon, health minister, said: "We have our difficulties, internal difficulties, and they [the PLO] have even more difficulties. I want to believe that we will be able to conclude in the next few days."

Israel has signalled it would be happy to sign only the self-rule agreement in a week's time in Washington, but the PLO wants

Ararat steps up drive to win Arab backing — Page 4

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Ararat steps up drive to win Arab backing — Page 4

VW orders inquiry into surge in Seat losses

By Christopher Parkes in Frankfurt

MR Ferdinand Piëch, Volkswagen chairman, has ordered an examination of the books at Seat, following a rapid and unexpected surge in losses at the car group's Spanish subsidiary.

He is believed to have commissioned a special audit after receiving reports of a looming deficit at Seat this year of DM800m (\$482m) or more, and requests for an urgent DM1bn cash injection.

The subsidiary, which was taken over in 1986 and operates some of the most modern and low-cost manufacturing sites in the group, lost DM10bn last year on sales of DM10bn.

The need for an investigation adds to the burdens of Mr Piëch, who is already weighed down by a bitter clash with General Motors of the US over allegations of industrial espionage.

At the same time, he is battling to restore his personal credibility after having had to back away from earlier promises that the struggling VW automotive group would return to profit this year.

Mr Piëch, VW chairman since January 1, last Friday took on extra responsibilities - for auditing and government relations - after discussions with the group's supervisory board on measures to save Seat.

No rescue decisions were taken, and a statement issued after the sitting referred only to "cause for concern" at Seat and

in North American and Asian-Pacific markets.

Whatever the findings of the audit, which will be reported directly to Mr Piëch, VW appears to have little alternative but to step in with a salvage operation which could wreck the chairman's hopes of a successful first financial year at the group.

VW lost DM10bn in the first half, although the supervisory board said on Friday that it expected a positive result in the third quarter for the German parent and the group as a whole.

The most likely source of cash for Seat is an intra-group transfer of DM1bn in return for which the parent would take control of the Spanish subsidiary's Pamplona plant, currently used to manufacture VW-marque Polo cars.

The sale had already been planned and now it seemed advisable to bring it forward, Seat said at the weekend.

The company blamed its troubles on the motor industry slump and the devaluation of the peseta, which had pushed up the cost of imported parts. It made no reference to the relative advantages for selling prices of the peseta's loss of value.

In the first half of this year, while VW group vehicle production fell 19 per cent, output of Seat cars tumbled 34 per cent.

VW has invested more than DM4bn in its Spanish business in the past two years, spending mainly on a new lean production factory at Martorell, and updating other sites.

In July Seat scrapped a joint venture with Suzuki of Japan to build 150,000 mini-cars a year in Barcelona.

Further cuts in Japanese car exports to Europe agreed

By Michioji Nakamoto in Tokyo

THE EUROPEAN Commission and Japanese authorities agreed at the weekend to cut the number of cars entering the European Community from Japan this year to 980,000 units, a fall of some 17.6 per cent from last year's level.

The deal, which was reached in Tokyo after two days of intense talks, goes much further than an earlier agreement in April that, given the weakness of the European car market, Japanese exports to the EC should be reduced by 9.4 per cent to 1.09m units.

The agreement favours the EC car industry at the expense of Japanese makers, which were hoping to keep the figure above 1m units. Japan was, however, able to win agreement that the level of Japanese exports could be adjusted mid-year, not only if EC market conditions deteriorated substantially, but also if they improved.

The two sides reached an understanding only after a second session of talks on Friday extended throughout the night to about midday on Saturday.

Exports to the UK are maintained under the new agreement at 202,800 on the grounds that market conditions are improving there. Exports to France are to fall to 69,000 from an initially agreed 73,000, while those to Italy are down to 38,800 from 42,900, Spain to 29,300 from 34,200 and Portugal to 39,000 from 41,500.

Under a monitoring arrangement aimed at gradually opening up the EC market to Japanese car exports, Japan limits the number of cars it exports to the EC to a mutually agreed level. This arrangement is due to end with full liberalisation in 1999.

The agreement in April was based on a forecast by the European Commission that the EC car market would fall 6.5 per cent this year to 13m units. However, EC automotive demand fell 18.5 per cent in the first seven months of the year. The latest agreement is based on mutual

recognition that demand for cars in the EC market will reach some 11.7m units in 1993.

Although the Japanese authorities had recognised the weakness of car demand in the EC, and were in principle agreed that a reduction would be necessary, they had at first resisted the EC's request, in part out of fear of setting an unwanted precedent.

The Japanese car industry, which has been under severe pressure from weak demand in its home market and fierce competition in the US in the wake of a higher yen, expressed a mixture of concern and resignation.

"Our basic stance is that given the weakness of the EC market, it cannot be helped," a Toyota official said.

It is unlikely Japanese car exports would have been much greater than the level agreed at the weekend. Exports to the EC were already down 15 per cent in the first six months of the year.

France in veto threat, Page 2

Commercial vehicle sales, Page 8

EC to probe antitrust allegations against Microsoft

By Louise Kehoe in San Francisco and Geoff Wheelwright in Vancouver

EC competition authorities are investigating allegations of anti-trust violations by Microsoft, the world's largest computer software company.

According to Microsoft, the EC investigation stems from a complaint filed on June 30 by Novell, the leading computer networking software company and Microsoft's arch-rival.

The allegations follow abortive secret merger talks between the two companies last year.

The Directorate General for Competition (DG4) is currently "assessing the merits of Novell's allegations," Microsoft said. "We believe Microsoft has acted in a legal and ethical manner and we look forward to presenting our evidence to the Directorate-General."

The EC antitrust investigation mirrors a similar probe by the US Justice Department, which recently began a review of information gathered over three years by the US Federal Trade Commission.

The Justice Department intervened after the FTC was deadlocked twice on whether to take action against Microsoft.

While under FTC investigation, Microsoft made an offer to acquire Novell for \$12bn-\$13bn.

In the UK, the Office of Fair Trading has also looked into charges of anti-competitive activities by Microsoft. However, the OFT is now believed to have suspended its investigation in view of DG4's involvement.

Each company now accuses the other of having failed to negotiate in good faith. Novell is bitter about what it sees as Microsoft's use of the protracted merger talks to slow its attempts to compete in the PC operating market.

Microsoft says it is Novell that dragged the talks out and finally called them off.

Novell declined to comment directly on its complaint, but acknowledged that it and "other significant software companies" have been involved in discussions with DG4 about Microsoft.

The complaint is, however, understood to charge that Micro-

Continued on Page 12

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NEWS: INTERNATIONAL

France may veto farm trade accord

By David Buchan in Paris

FRANCE yesterday revived its threat to veto the European Community's draft farm trade accord with the US unless substantial changes are made to the agreement.

Over the weekend, a senior French official warned that France would tell its EC partners at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on September 20 that France would refuse to sign the Blair House accord unless agricultural discussions with the US were reopened.

"Unless it is now reopened," the official said, "there will be a crisis in September rather than December" - the target date for finishing the Uruguay Round of global trade liberalisation talks.

France in the next few weeks will step up its campaign to persuade the rest of the Community of the need to water down the restraints on European farm exports agreed last November.

Threat of veto marks a toughening of the rhetoric

France wants to secure the support of a majority of member states at the Council of Ministers meeting. But the prospect of Paris using its veto on the issue marks a toughening of the rhetoric of the Blair House government. In its five months in office, it has sought to negotiate itself out of its isolation on agriculture, rather than publicly brandish its veto.

"If the Commission does not budge," said the official yesterday, "we will invoke the Luxembourg compromise [the convention by which a veto may be used in defence of a vital national interest]."

"And if it does not budge, the Commission, which is

charged with the solidarity of the Community, will be responsible for its breaking up."

Mr Peter Sutherland, Gatt's new director-general, is due in Paris on Wednesday to see Mr Edouard Balladur, prime minister, and is expected to warn him that re-opening the Blair House accord would be counterproductive for Europe in terms of winning new US concessions, and would cause the Uruguay Round to miss its December 15 negotiating deadline.

In Bonn yesterday, Mr Klaus Kinkel, German foreign minister, indicated he hoped France would settle for a reinterpretation of the agreement rather than renegotiation.

While Germany has made sympathetic noises over the French position, it has made clear it does not want to reopen the accord.

"We have had a delegation of experts in Paris," Mr Kinkel told German radio. "Perhaps we will come to a point through interpretations where a change in the Blair House accord will not be necessary."

He added that a solution might be found before the September 20 meeting of EC ministers.

However, Mr Kinkel said he understood France's opposition to the accord, which entails a 21 per cent reduction in subsidised farm exports.

France, which has sought in particular to ensure the agreement is compatible with the EC's own farm reform, is likely to deny the need for haste on agriculture when many non-farm aspects of the Gatt negotiations are behind schedule. It will try to secure new concessions by putting the onus on other member states more anxious than France about the December deadline.

Meanwhile, French farmers, who are planning mass demonstrations on September 15, are now accusing the government of duplicity, of showing a softer face on Gatt to France's partners than to France's farmers.

Labour minister proposes measures to combat France's record unemployment rate Paris seeks pact on flexible working hours

By David Buchan

THE government of Mr Edouard Balladur is to invite France's employers and trade unions to strike an historic bargain on the flexible working of shorter hours, in an attempt to reduce the country's record 11.7 per cent unemployment rate.

In an interview with the Financial Times, Mr Michel Giraud, France's labour minister, confirmed he would make the proposal when he and Mr Balladur meet employers and union leaders today to get their final views on the government's planned five-year labour pact. The bill is shortly to go before parliament.

The conservative government has responded to employers' demands for more flexible labour patterns by setting an annual, rather than weekly, cap on working hours. But in a shift from last spring's election campaign, in which it mocked Socialist calls for shorter hours, the government is now inviting employers to join unions in negotiating a reduction in the 39-hour maximum work week.

"I know that many unions are much more positive about the 'annualisation' of working hours if there is the prospect of reducing these hours overall," said Mr Giraud. "If companies which want the flexibility of annualised work limits are ready to make an effort in reducing the length of work, why not?"

This suggested trade-off is part of Mr Giraud's attempt to reverse France's structural tendency to shed jobs faster and to create employment more slowly than most other leading industrial countries. By July, there were 3.21m unemployed, 21m, with the loss of jobs in the second half of the year still officially forecast to outstrip the disappearance of 175,000 jobs in the first half.

The labour minister described the priority the government was giving to unemployment as "obsessional", reflecting society's widespread fears about the problem. He cited a recent survey showing that eight in every 10 French schoolchildren feared they would end up in the dole queue.

But in contrast to the piecemeal approach of the Socialist government which produced six labour laws in five years, Mr Giraud claims his catch-all programme for the next five years will tackle France's fundamental problems of high labour costs, inadequate training, and rigid practices, many dating back to the Socialist-led Popular Front of the 1930s and before.

Measures include a progressive shift of family allowance charges from the salaries of lower-paid workers to the central state budget, a five-year freeze on new welfare charges on payrolls, and tax breaks for job-creating companies, as well as deregulation.

At the rhetorical level, France's

new centre-right government insists on the need for the European Community, even the Gatt world trade organisation, to have social policies. But Mr Giraud says: "I am a liberal, and we don't want to put social policy handcuffs on ourselves, or others."

In domestic political terms, Mr Giraud, a member of the RPR Gaullist party, insists that he is in no way attacking France's "essential social achievements". Indeed, he says he would like to see stronger unions in France, and in the priority which he and Mr Balladur have given to "social dialogue", the unions "have a chance to reinforce themselves". He does not, for instance, like to alarm the unions by using the word "flexibility" too much.

But he clearly approves of the concept. In May he proposed the government should step in to help compensate workers who took pay cuts to avoid redundancies. He had to withdraw the idea when some companies were believed to be making false threats of job cuts to get the state to pay part of their pay cheques. However, his five-year plan contains a clever modification of something even more sensitive - France's minimum wage, the Smic, which many experts feel has helped price low-skilled workers out of the job market.

"We are not touching the structure of the Smic," says Mr Giraud. "To do that would needlessly stir up a con-



Giraud: wants stronger unions

frontation." But the new law would allow companies to pay young workers below the Smic rate, if they devote most of the saving to training the lower-paid young. Another move would be to start schoolchildren on "pre-apprenticeships" from the age of 14, instead of delaying all vocational/manual training until they leave school at 16.

France still has no fewer than 72 labour laws dating from 1936-37, and many of these need updating, says Mr Giraud. One of these is a 1937 law

which, for bank employees, still decrees two consecutive days of rest. This means most banks cannot open on a Saturday without closing on a Monday - except for Credit Agricole, which is now France's largest commercial bank but before the war was a closed mutual association.

Another anomaly, common to all European countries, which Mr Giraud hopes he can settle in Sunday trading. The Virgin Megastore on the Champs Elysees has brought this issue to a head by defying the 1906 law against Sunday opening. Essentially, Mr Giraud is passing this buck to local prefectures, but with the clear indication that they should let shops in tourist spots open on Sundays.

"Against clandestine employment, I am totally inflexible," says Mr Giraud, complaining that companies which fail to give their workers proper pay and social protection "distort competition" against law-abiding companies.

But a subtler way of discouraging *travail noir* is the draft law's new experiment of "ticket-service". The idea is to encourage people into the provision of part-time services, such as running errands for the elderly, and being paid for these services in tickets bought at post offices. "There's nothing wrong with services," insists Mr Giraud, seeking to reverse his countrymen's tendency to think that only production counts.

Report predicts further rises for D-Mark

James Blitz on the likely effects of repaying Bundesbank for intervention

THE French franc, Danish krone and Belgian franc have weakened in recent weeks against the D-Mark, as currency dealers take the view that their central banks need to reduce short-term interest rates to stimulate economic growth.

But foreign exchange analysts believe these currencies could come under more pressure in the next few months as a result of their central banks' reserve management operations, in the wake of the recent crisis in the European exchange rate mechanism.

In a report published today, Idea, the market intelligence group, says reserve management should strengthen the D-Mark over the next few months.

The central banks of France, Denmark and Belgium need to buy D-Marks from the foreign exchange market to repay the Bundesbank for supporting their currencies through intervention during last month's ERM crisis.

Under ERM rules, the Bundesbank would need to be repaid within three months of the intervention, giving these central banks a repayment deadline of mid-November.

The central banks also need to build up their foreign exchange reserves if they are to regain control over short-term movements in their currencies' exchange rates. In France's case, these reserves were heavily depleted at the height of the crisis.

As they buy D-Marks and

sell their own currencies, central banks will tend to have an impact on short-term movements in exchange rates. Foreign exchange dealers, therefore, have been wondering what impact this will have.

Idea calculates that there are likely to be some DM75bn (£30bn) of D-Mark purchases by European central banks over the next six months. "To place these flows in perspective, central banks are likely to effectively finance more than two years worth of German current account deficits in the next six months," says Mr Alan Ruskin, the report's author.

The report suggests that these operations put a cap on the value of the dollar against the D-Mark. But their impact on European currencies will

depend on exactly how the central banks manage their reserve building operations.

Idea's report says the Bundesbank and the Bank of France could, between them, buy DM91bn of the German currency and sell FF320bn (£36.8bn) of the French currency, in a move that would greatly strengthen the D-Mark's rate against the French franc.

But both central banks could diversify the operations, using other currencies to cap the rise in the D-Mark. Instead of buying DM91bn, they could, for example, buy \$10bn (£5.5bn) of the US currency and DM75bn of the German. "The net effect is still very D-Mark positive," says Idea.

The report suggests the

scope for central banks to recoup reserves without hurting their currencies will be far more limited than in previous crises. In the old ERM system, there was a propensity for the newly devalued currencies to move towards the top of their ERM bands after a realignment, on the expectation that the new bands would last. This time, the widening of the ERM bands and the expectation of interest rate cuts means the value of these currencies will weaken in any event.

The reserve transactions of the central banks could also be difficult to interpret if the French authorities take advantage of provisions to roll forward borrowings under the EC's very short-term financing facility.

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1. This is the business traveller who made a mistake.



3. This is the bed they said was a queen-size.



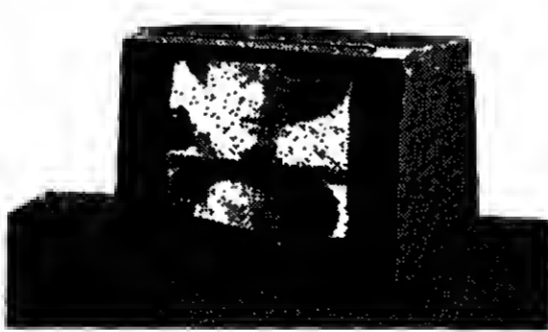
5. This is the important paper that wasn't delivered.



7. This is the place he should have stayed.



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4. This is the movie they showed on TV.



6. This is the important paper he couldn't find.

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FT. Because business is never black and white.

Ericsson set to win Polish telecoms deal

By Christopher Bobinski in Warsaw

ERICSSON, the Swedish telecommunications company, is expected to win a \$100m (86m) defence telecommunications contract from Poland. It is the country's first such contract to be awarded to a supplier outside the former Warsaw Pact.

Mr Roman Czerwinski, a deputy industry and trade minister, said at the weekend at an arms exhibition in Kielce that the government would be taking the decision this week.

Under the contract Ericsson, which was competing with Marconi and Bae of the UK, would produce mobile radio network equipment under a joint venture with the Unimor factory in Gdansk. Deliveries are to be spread out until the year 2000.

Ericsson has so far failed to win big contracts to supply civilian telecommunications equipment to Poland. Under the country's World Bank-financed programme most of the telephone systems in the longer term are to come from three suppliers, of whom two, Alcatel of France and AT&T, the US group, have already been chosen. Siemens of Germany and Northern Telecom, the Canadian company, are competing to become the third supplier.

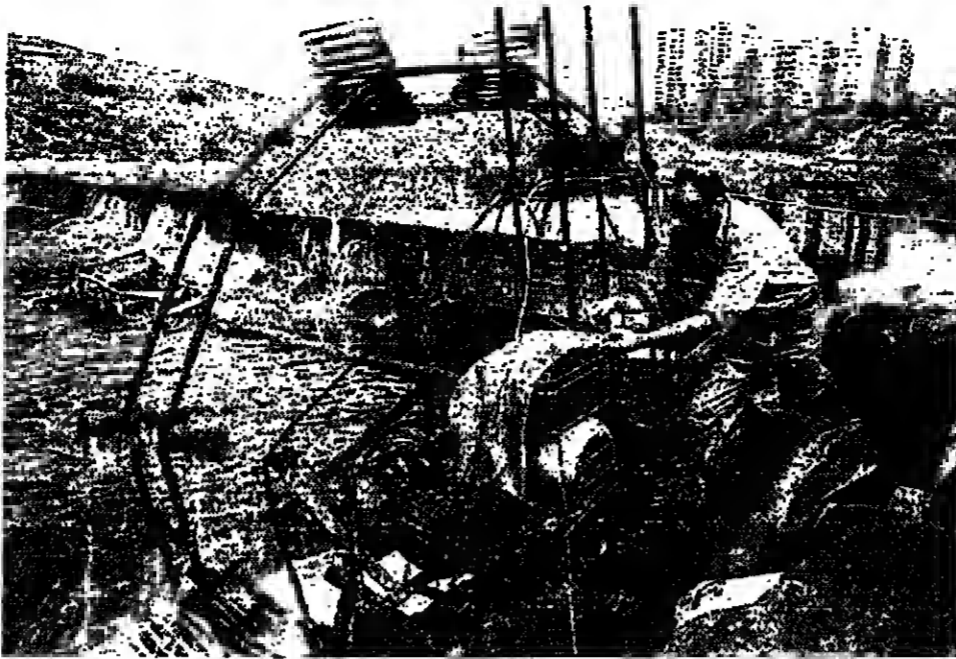
Unimor, which makes TV sets, would control two thirds of the equity in the proposed joint venture with Ericsson, involving a \$25m investment in new technology.

Meanwhile Bofors, another Swedish company, is renewing pre-war links with Huta Stalowa Wola, a large defence works in south eastern Poland which has for over a year been selling components for production of Bofors' 40mm gun system.

Talks are under way on a co-operation agreement to produce entire turrets for an armoured combat vehicle at the Polish works.

Bofors is also looking to the Mesko arms works to provide parts for its Bill anti-tank missile. Mesko already has a barter agreement with Thomson-CSF, the French arms group which is delivering artillery fuses to the plant and is also interested in co-operating in production of rockets and rocket systems.

The Kielce arms fair is the first of its kind in an area where around four-fifths of Poland's arms industry is located. The industry is suffering from a dearth of orders from the Polish army as well as a collapse of former Soviet bloc markets. However, British and US arms producers were conspicuous at Kielce by their absence.



A Sarajevo resident adjusts the power on the hydro power plant he has built to supply his home with electricity and overcome the near-constant blackouts in the besieged city

Mostar evacuation delayed

THE evacuation of some 50 wounded Moslems from the south-west Bosnian city of Mostar was postponed yesterday for the second day running, Bosnian radio reported, Reuter reports from Sarajevo.

The radio reported yesterday evening that a general alert had been called in Mostar, where it said the besieged Moslem sector on the east bank of

the Neretva river was being attacked by Croatian forces using multiple-rocket launchers.

Croatian radio said the evacuation from Mostar had been postponed until today because of weather conditions.

However, a Reuter journalist in Medjugorje, near Mostar, quoted members of the United Nations Spanish battalion deployed in the area as saying

UN troops were waiting the arrival of Bosnian helicopters that would fly the wounded to Moslem-held towns.

The evacuation from Mostar was arranged between Moslems and Croats in exchange for the shifting of wounded Croat soldiers and civilians from Nova Bila in central Bosnia, where fierce fighting is raging between the two former allies.

GM-VW dispute under fire

THE HEADS of two German car companies at the weekend criticised the public row between rivals Volkswagen and US-based General Motors over alleged industrial espionage as being damaging to the industry generally, Reuter reports from Frankfurt.

Mr Bernd Pischetsrieder, chairman of BMW, told Die Welt newspaper: "There is much more at stake than a loss of image for the automotive industry. Industry leaders in general are coming under fire."

Separately, Mr Wendelin Wiedeking, chairman of German luxury sports car maker Porsche, criticised the public nature of the VW-GM dispute.

"It would be better for the whole of the automotive industry if the dispute between VW and Opel had remained in internal channels and not been fought in public," Mr Wiedeking told the Stuttgarter Zeitung newspaper on Saturday.

GM and its German subsidiary Adam Opel have accused Mr José Ignacio López de Arriortua, VW's production chief, and other former GM managers of taking confidential documents from the US group when they switched to VW this year. Mr López and the others deny the charges.

Ukraine deal with Russia under attack

By John Lloyd in Moscow

OPPOSITION is growing to Ukraine's agreement to sell its half of the Black Sea Fleet, and to return its nuclear warheads, to Russia. Ukraine has thereby put itself into political crisis.

The agreement, announced by President Leonid Kravchuk and President Boris Yeltsin after talks on Friday, was denounced over the weekend by a Ukrainian minister, Mr Valery Shmarov. It was described by a deputy premier as "nothing short of a disaster" and by Mr Vyacheslav Chornovil, head of the nationalist opposition party, Rukh, as "high treason".

Mr Kravchuk himself partly defended, partly denied, his alleged agreement to the deal. General Konstantin Morozov, defence minister, said yesterday that no agreement on the sale of the Ukrainian fleet had yet been concluded. Mr Kravchuk stressed that details of both the sale of the fleet and the transfer of the warheads had to be worked out by joint commissions.

Mr Yeltsin said after the

meeting that the cost of the fleet would be set against an estimated \$2.5bn which Kiev owes to Moscow for oil and gas supplies.

The Russian president, in a television interview on Saturday, rubbed the message home by saying that Ukraine's surrender of her share of the fleet - agreed to be split last year - was "forced but inevitable". The costs, he said, "will have to be reckoned up. But we have done our own reckoning already. We aren't losing by it, and we'll have our own fleet".

Mr Kravchuk, who has appeared in the past month to switch from a line generally hostile to Russia to one where he favours closer integration, now faces the hardest challenge of his political life.

Confronted with 40 per cent inflation, falling production and growing unrest in the industrial areas - especially in the Donbass coal and steel region - he must now garner support for a policy of alliance with Russia, and a loss of some of the strongly expressed independence whose spokesman he has been.

Inflation down but strong in Greece

By Karin Hope in Athens

GREECE'S year-on-year inflation rate dropped to 14.6 per cent last month, from 15.7 per cent in July, raising hopes that the government's target of 12 per cent by December can be achieved.

Although the inflation rate has gradually declined from a peak of 16.4 per cent in March, it is still more than four times the European Community average.

Progress in reducing inflation has been slower than expected, partly because of the effects of price liberalisation in the services sector.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development points out, in a new report on the Greek economy, that "inflation expectations remain strong" despite a marked decline in both the public sector borrowing requirement and the current account deficit.

The report said exchange rate policy should be reformed by announcing in advance the depreciation rate of the drachma against other European currencies, so as to "reinforce confidence in the government's anti-inflation posture."

The report forecast that Greece's gross national product would grow by about 1 per cent this year, down from 1.25 per cent in 1992 but ahead of the European average.

However, it warned that the government could not afford to relax its stabilisation policy before an election due by next spring.

Revenues for the first eight months of 1993 fell well short of the budget target, despite the Finance Ministry's efforts to curb tax evasion and speed collection of tax arrears.

According to the national accounting office, revenues rose by 13.4 per cent against a budget forecast of 26.4 per cent.

Lira fall boosts Italian exports

By Robert Graham in Rome

THE INCREASED competitiveness of Italian exports, as a result of last September's lira devaluation, has been confirmed by statistics just published on trade for the first six months of 1993.

In this period, Italy's total exports rose 19 per cent. Within the EC, the increase was lower, at 11 per cent. This reflected both the depressed state of most European economies and fierce competition from other exporters, such as the UK, which have also seen currencies depreciate sharply.

Even so, with the EC absorbing almost 60 per cent of Italian exports, the impact on Italy's terms of trade was significant. More exports, combined with its recession-hit economy, ensured a sharp turnaround in trade balance.

Istat, the national statistics institute, said Italy recorded a half-year overall surplus of L3,611bn (£3.6bn), against a L13,647bn deficit for the 1992 first half. The rise is reflected in an improved performance in all product sectors.

On a country basis, the most spectacular change has been in Italian-German trade, as a result of a 30 per cent devaluation of the lira against the D-mark. In the first half Italy recorded a surplus of L2,734bn with Germany, its main trading partner, compared to a deficit of L3,995bn during the equivalent period in 1992. Also, given a strong depreciation against the French franc, Italian exports moved from a L1,689bn deficit to a L970bn surplus.

In the case of the UK, the increase was substantial, but lower than those of Germany and France. The trade balance with the UK increased from a L238bn surplus to L1,453bn. The UK is Italy's third largest partner in the EC.

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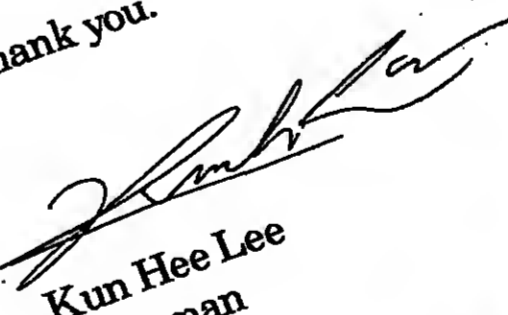
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Arafat steps up drive to win Arab backing

By Lami Andoni in Amman and Mark Nicholson in London

MR YASSIR Arafat, Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman, is intensifying efforts to win Arab support for his outline deal with Israel, and to reach an accommodation with Palestinian opposition to the plan, before he signs the historic accord.

Mr Arafat at the weekend secured backing from the leaders of the mainstream Fatah faction in the PLO and won full public support from King Hussein, the Jordanian ruler, who had demurred at the pact, largely in anger at having been left out of its formulation.

Yesterday, the Palestinian leader arrived in Damascus for the most important leg of his present tour of Arab capitals.

In Syria, Mr Arafat will try to talk President Hafez al-Assad out of any reservations he may have over the outline agreement on Palestinian self-rule, and will address opposition to it among the radical Palestinian factions based in Damascus.

Mr Assad has still made no formal comment on the proposed agreement, although dip-

lomats suggest that the Syrian leader was affronted by Mr Arafat's refusal to consult Damascus during the secret negotiations leading to agreement with Israel.

The Syrian leader has always sought to exercise strong influence over the pace and course of the Arab partners' negotiations with Israel, and the surprise announcement of a separate PLO deal with Israel will have come as a severe shock.

But Mr Assad's approval could also be vital to softening resistance within the 10 Damascus-based Palestinian opposition groups to the deal - something which in turn would ease Mr Arafat's task of pushing the deal through the PLO's broader decision-making bodies.

Israeli and US officials are eager to see the outline accord signed as soon as September 13, but Mr Arafat seems in no rush to conclude, nor even to win formal Israeli official recognition of the PLO, before he has secured strong Arab backing and an accommodation with Palestinian opposition groups.

Broadening Palestinian backing is particularly important since Mr Arafat's own Fatah faction stipulated, after three days of talks last week, that

the PLO-Israel deal must be ratified by the PLO central council, the 100-strong body which represents most strands within the Palestinian movement. A meeting of the group is likely to be called within weeks.

Mr Arafat still has to contend with intense debate within the PLO over how to accommodate Israeli demands without undermining the credibility and legitimacy of the organisation among the Palestinian people.

Some PLO officials argue that to meet Israel's terms would require modification of the 1968 PLO charter, articles of which in essence call for the destruction of Israel. But Mr Arafat is likely to try to avoid this, since any such amendments would require convening the 400-member Palestine National Council, the movement's parliament-in-exile, which would provide a potent forum for opposition to the outline deal with Israel.

Instead, Mr Arafat is working on a draft statement which would trigger Israeli recognition of the PLO, basing this on the argument that the charter has been superseded by events and by previous Palestinian resolutions accepting the existence of Israel.

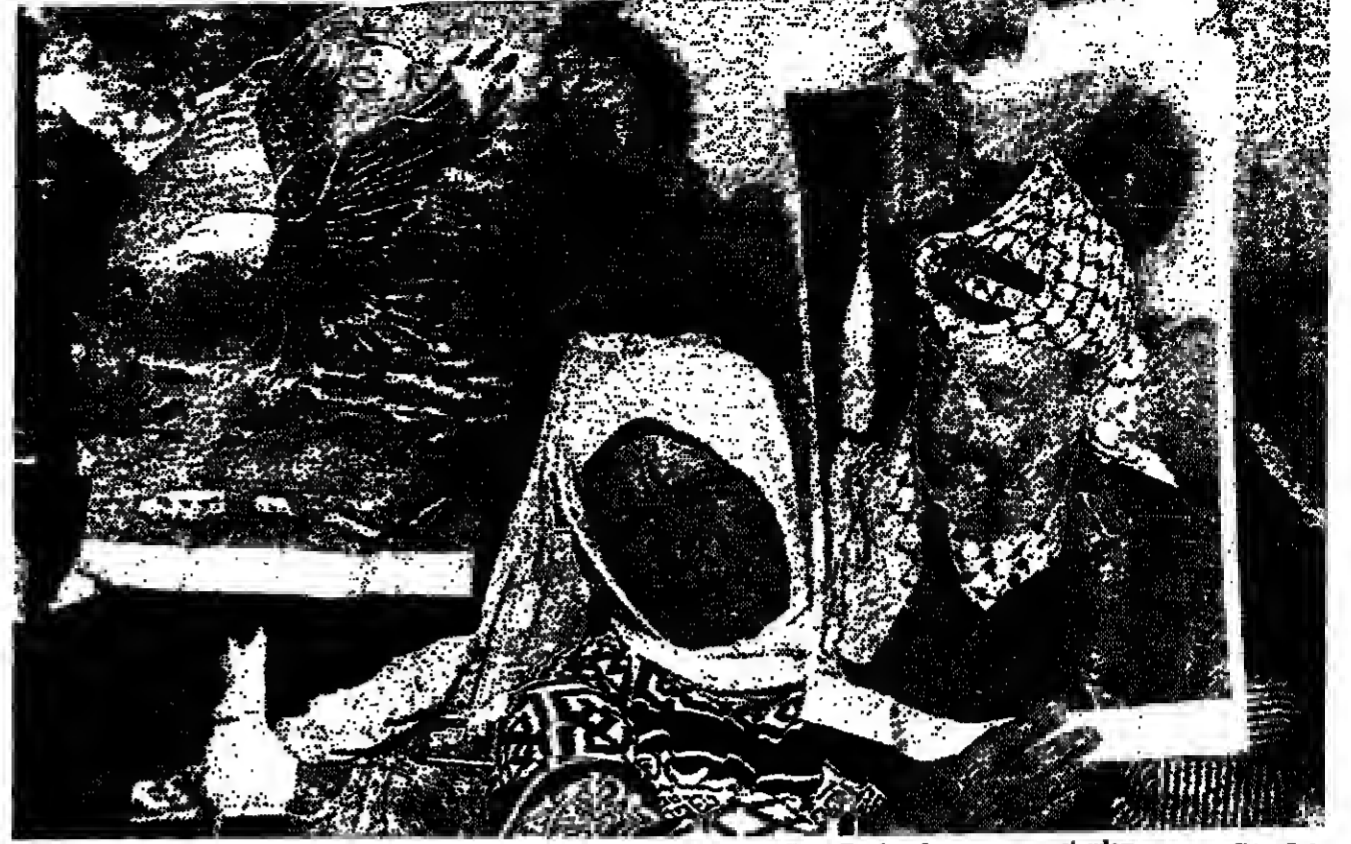
Milk, honey, razor wire

Julian Ozanne and Andrew Gowers in an unlikely Promised Land

IT TAKES imagination to conceive of the Gaza Strip - 360 square kilometres of desert dotted with squalid Palestinian refugee camps and shanty towns - as the Promised Land. But that is what it has become for 5,000 Jewish settlers who live there in red-tiled homes surrounded by well-tended lawns.

Mediterranean waves break on deserted beaches, and fields full of ripening vegetables and high-tech glasshouses sprout from the parched sand dunes. A horse ranch offers pony-trekking for tourists, and Jewish settlers say they never lock their homes and caravans. The Palm Beach Hotel, which caters for ultra-orthodox Jews, even has a coffee shop called Milk and Honey.

The seeming idyllic life enjoyed by Jewish pioneers who have settled beyond the



PLO supporters backing the peace plan brandish pictures of Yasser Arafat at a West Bank refugee camp yesterday

"Green Line" dividing Jews and Arabs is slightly surreal, however. The coils of razor-wire and electrified fences, and the revolvers on the hips of many settlers, serve as reminders of how tenuous life has been in the settlement of Gush Katif, surrounded by 800,000 Palestinians.

Now, under a plan for Palestinian self-rule agreed in prin-

ciple by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the settlers of Gaza face an uncertain future. Many see history repeating itself. They predict that they will be sacrificed in the end by the government - just as the settlers in the Egyptian Sinai desert were when Israel, in 1978, handed back the land it had captured in 1967. (At least 70 of the

families who made a last stand of civil disobedience at the Yamit settlement in the Sinai, before being forcibly evacuated by Israeli troops, now live in Gush Katif.)

"Morale could drop and people will leave, so the government hopes it will have less of a problem down the road getting the rest of the Jews out," said Mr Yosef Shomron, an American who settled in Gush Katif nine months ago, for a mixture of ideological and economic reasons.

"We are very angry and upset by the plan. There will be resistance to leaving, like in Yamit, and one or two guys might go and shoot - but Jews won't fight against other Jews. There will be no cult of violence," he said, sitting outside his prefabricated home.

Mr Shomron supports the Kach movement, which wants to transfer all the 1.5m Palestinians out of the occupied territories. Others oppose the self-rule plan for religious reasons. They believe that Gaza, Judea and Samaria (otherwise called the West Bank) are part of the biblical Eretz Yisrael (land of Israel).

"There will be no peace. Arab will kill Arab and they will turn their violence against the Jewish state," said Mrs Roberta Bienenfeld, a

translator who has lived here for 12 years. "God is taking his revenge against the state of Israel and all its unbelongers. We hope the plan won't go through so we can keep our land that God gave us."

Some settlers are more pragmatic. Mr Michael Goldschmidt, an immigrant from South Africa and one of the founders of Gush Katif, has invested more than Shklim over 16 years in an agricultural business growing cherry tomatoes and flower bulbs in greenhouses for export to the US and Europe. He said he would be prepared to leave if the agreement with Palestinians delivered "real peace to Israel". "We are very happy here but we will have to give up one day," he said, watching a group of Palestinian workers wash his flower bulbs.

But even more moderate settlers, such as Mr Goldschmidt, are bewildered by the agreement. "We built everything here out of sand. It was nothing before we came. Why do we have to give it up? We fought for it and captured it. Israel is a small country - there is no gold here, so why do the Arabs want our land? We have nowhere else to go. But we have to give it back because we are weak and we are Jews."

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Debt rescheduling 'urgent' for Algeria

By Francis Ghéès

MR Mourad Benbachou, a strong believer in the need to reschedule Algeria's \$26bn (\$17bn) foreign debt, was appointed at the weekend as finance minister in the Algerian government of Mr Redha Malek, named prime minister two weeks ago.

Mr Benbachou was Finance Ministry secretary-general in the 1970s and Algerian representative at the World Bank. After eight years there, he was sacked in the spring of 1981 and conducted a vitriolic campaign in the Algerian press against the team which, around Mr Mouloud Hamrouche, then prime minister, had launched radical reforms in 1980-1981 aimed at freeing the management of the country's economy.

The new minister recently wrote: "Rescheduling becomes urgent, of little cost if you compare it to the alternative of total economic collapse threatening our country if the self-imposed policy of strangu-

lation continues."

Talk of rescheduling the country's foreign debt has long been a taboo in Algeria. Seeking an accommodation with the International Monetary Fund and leading creditors such as France is the most urgent task confronting the new government - annual repayment of principal and interest payments absorb three quarters of Algeria oil and gas export income.

Mr Benbachou is one of two key appointees to the new government after the sacking of Mr Belaid Abdessalam as prime minister. Colonel Selim Saadi, a respected former military commander and agriculture minister, takes on the interior portfolio. He is a close political friend of Mr Malek.

General Lamine Zeroual retains the defence portfolio. The new minister of energy is the former deputy finance minister, Mr Ahmed Ben Bitour, while the foreign portfolio goes to Mr Mohamed Salah Dembri, a diplomat and former professor of French literature.

Nigerians killed in Somalia

SEVEN Nigerian peace-keeping troops with the UN and at least 15 Somalis, some of them women and children, were killed yesterday when a patrol tried to shoot its way free of gunmen loyal to the Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aideed. Reuters reports from Mogadishu.

Somali gunmen also captured two Nigerian peacekeepers in the worst attack on the 25,000-strong UN army in Somalia since August 8, when four US troops were killed in an ambush.

The Nigerians, who had been surrounded by angry Somalis along a city road, were killed before they could retreat, residents said. Nearby Italian other UN troops were reported as having been prevented from helping them by burning barricades and mobs.

The latest attack raised the UN death toll to 46 since June 5, when Gen Aideed's supporters killed 24 Pakistani UN troops at the start of a campaign against UN control of Somalia's rehabilitation.

Strikes paralyse Malawi

A WAVE of public sector strikes has brought ministries, hospitals and airports to a standstill in Malawi. Post office and telecommunications workers are threatening to join the dispute this week, writes Nicholas Young in Lilongwe.

Civil servants demanding wage rises of more than 100 per cent have been on strike since Thursday, and Lilongwe airport remains closed after action by traffic controllers.

The government claims to have a settlement with health workers, but clinical officers at Blantyre's Queen Elizabeth Hospital say they are treating only emergency cases, and hospital administrators are in dispute with management.

Popular expectations have been raised by the result of the referendum in June on Malawi's constitutional future. A majority voted in favour of a multi-party system of government. President Hastings Banda, Malawi's Congress party, in power for 28 years, is negotiating with opposition groups a general election timetable.

Clinton goes campaigning on all fronts

President is trying to make up for time lost on the budget battle, writes George Graham

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's first 100 days in office bogged down disastrously in the struggle to pass his budget. Now he has set himself an ambitious autumn agenda to make up for lost time, and even his most resolute supporters are wondering if he has the capacity to carry it out.

Congress returns to Washington this week to wrap up the unfinished business of its last session - the confirmation of Dr Joycelyn Elders to be surgeon general, and a new national service programme - and already Mr Clinton is preparing to put more indigestible meat on its plate.

Tomorrow, Vice-President Al Gore will unveil the results of his review of the federal government's management structures and procurement processes, a report dubbed "Reinventing Government" which is expected to produce substantial savings as well as civil service job cuts.

Next week, the White House is expected to submit to congress legislation implementing the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico, raising the curtain on a battle that has already bitterly divided the Democratic party.

Just one week later, probably on

September 22, Mr Clinton will announce the outlines of his proposals for reforming the US health care system - a massive undertaking that many politicians believe would on its own occupy a whole presidential term.

And foreign affairs may demand Mr Clinton's attention, with the possibility of a Middle East peace agreement, the likelihood of continued grief in Bosnia, and the challenge of the United Nations general assembly.

Mr Clinton on Saturday defended his determination to advance on all fronts at once.

"Health security, expanded trade and reinventing government really aren't separate goals. They are part of a comprehensive strategy to promote long-term growth, increased incomes, more jobs and a stronger American community," he said in his weekly radio speech. "These pieces must all fit together."

But critics say that by trying to play too many tunes at once, Mr Clinton may be ignoring a lesson most Americans learn before they are six from "Sesame Street": the educational television programme: you've got to put down the duck if you want to play the saxophone.

The Gore report offers the best prospects of immediate dividends.

White House officials say around two-thirds of Mr Gore's proposals can be implemented by executive order, without going through Congress.

But elements which would require legislation - such as a proposal to move the federal government to budgeting over two years rather than one, as 21 states already do - are unlikely to make any headway in Congress.

Perhaps the greatest danger of the Gore report is excessive expectations.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that Mr Gore would aim for savings of \$100m over five years, including \$20m from simplification of government purchasing rules. It also said 252,000 civil service jobs would be eliminated, with "buy-out" incentives offered to encourage voluntary departures.

Critics say the president is attempting to play too many tunes at once

Congress.

Mr Robert Matsui, the leading Democratic cheerleader for Nafta in the House of Representatives, complains that even his wife, who heads White House efforts to rally grassroots support for the treaty, will not say Nafta is her number one priority. That number one priority for most Democrats, including the White House, is healthcare.

Some administration officials say, however, that Mr Gore wants to avoid overreaching and will claim much smaller savings, as well as warning that it will take years to implement all of his proposals.

The review is expected to recommend halving middle management, aiming for a ratio of one supervisor to every 15 workers, instead of the current ratio of one to seven.

Nafta is a much more controversial element of Mr Clinton's autumn agenda. Many of his fellow Democrats hotly oppose the treaty, which they believe will lead to the transfer of US jobs to Mexico.

Even those who support Nafta in the abstract wonder why Mr Clinton should waste political capital fighting for a treaty negotiated by his predecessor, alienating in the process important Democratic constituencies such as the trade unions.

Mr Robert Matsui, the leading Democratic cheerleader for Nafta in the House of Representatives, complains that even his wife, who heads White House efforts to rally grassroots support for the treaty, will not say Nafta is her number one priority. That number one priority for most Democrats, including the White House, is healthcare.

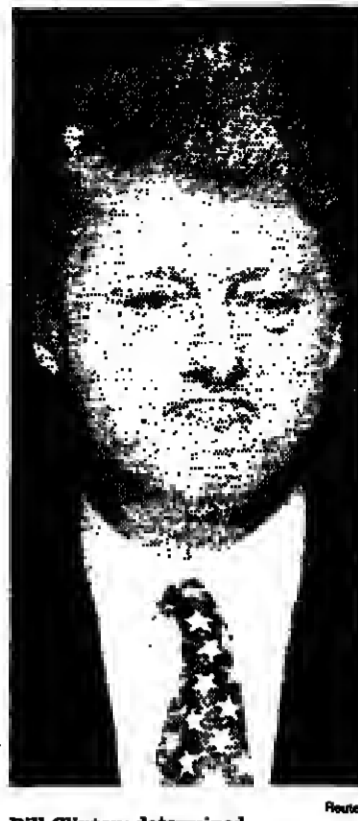
The reform may be controversial. Many Democrats still favour a

national system like Canada's rather than the managed competition espoused by Mr Clinton, under which employers would be encouraged to group themselves in purchasing co-operatives in the hope that they will be able to negotiate cheaper and more comprehensive insurance.

Elements of the plan are likely to face fierce opposition from businesses, trade unions and industry lobbies, but health care reform is absolutely essential to Mr Clinton's programme - the country demands it - and he should receive support in Congress not just from the core of his fellow Democrats but from many Republicans.

The biggest doubt about Mr Clinton's ability to reach these separate goals stems from the political style he displayed in his first six months. His willingness to compromise if opposed has encouraged most members of Congress - not just political heavyweights like Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia but novices like Senator Patty Murray of Washington - to believe they can safely humiliate the president in any trial of political will.

That belief may now be impossible to dispel, and will handicap Mr Clinton when the time comes to fight for his proposals.



Bill Clinton: determined

Japan set to lower interest rates

By Robert Thomson in Tokyo

THE BANK OF JAPAN is on the verge of reducing official interest rates in an attempt to stimulate ailing economy and restore consumer and corporate confidence.

After an apparent leak from the central bank, Japanese media widely reported yesterday that the official discount rate (ODR) would this month be cut from 2.5 per cent to 2 per cent, a post-war low.

The bank is scheduled to release its quarterly survey of business, the *tankei*, this week, and bank officials are concerned that a lack of confidence in the economy is prompting companies to cut capital investment targets.

Mr Yasuichi Mieno, the bank's governor, is known to be reluctant to set a new ODR low, but the recent appreciation of the yen has further undermined corporate confidence and delayed a recovery.

Japan's new coalition government has been urged by business groups to cut income taxes or the ODR to stimulate the economy, but the finance ministry has resisted a tax cut, arguing that revenues have fallen sharply in the past year.

The seven coalition parties are divided over interest rate policy. Some members of the Social Democratic party, formerly the Japan Socialist party, argue that a fall in rates will hurt old people dependent on savings for income.

There has also been concern in the government that another rate cut, the seventh in two years, would lead to a surge in asset prices and unfairly benefit banks, which are likely to profit from the rate spread.

But the government is under pressure from trading partners to prove that it is attempting to rekindle growth. The current account surplus has expanded for 23 consecutive months, and Mr Morihiro Hosokawa, prime minister, would like to take along a rate cut or some other initiative when he visits the US late this month.

The lack of consumer confidence highlighted by falling retail sales was also reflected in a survey released yesterday by the prime minister's office. Only 4.8 per cent of 10,000 people surveyed thought their life had improved over the past year, down from 7.3 per cent.

While the weakening economy has undermined consumer confidence, the annual survey found that an accompanying reduction in overtime led to a fall from 39.9 per cent to 37.9 per cent in respondents who felt that they had no spare time.

NEWS IN BRIEF

GDP up 10.4% in Malaysia

MALAYSIA'S gross domestic product grew by 10.4 per cent in the second quarter, writes Kieran Cooke in Kuala Lumpur. This compares with 9.6 per cent in the same period last year and 7.6 in the first quarter, according to the central bank. Growth for the year could now average out at more than 8 per cent, analysts think.

Manufacturing output rose 17.4 per cent in the second quarter. Agricultural production went up 8.1 per cent, mainly thanks to palm oil.

US textiles demand angers China

China has said US demands for stricter penalties in a new textiles agreement violate bilateral and international trade pacts, AP reports from Beijing.

Ms Jennifer Hillman, of the US trade representative's office, said on Saturday that China must crack down on transshipment of its textiles through third countries before a new agreement could be reached. Otherwise, the US could limit textile imports unilaterally whenever Chinese goods were found to cause market disruptions.

Argentina records zero inflation

Argentina's inflation rate fell to zero in August, its lowest level in 25 years, writes John Barham in Buenos Aires. Inflation so far this year has fallen to 5.8 per cent - almost a third less than in the first eight months of last year - and official forecasts put next year's inflation rate at 4.5 per cent.

New banks to open in Mexico

Mexico has approved the charters of five new commercial banks in an attempt to increase competition in the nation's recently privatised banking system, writes David Lubnow in Mexico City. The new banks are Banco Inbursa, Banco Promotor del Norte, Banco Interacciones, Banco Quadrum and Banco Mifel. All except Banco Promotor del Norte are eyeing the nationwide market.

California plans earlier primary ballots

By George Graham in Washington

CALIFORNIA plans to hold its presidential primary ballot earlier in the year, heralding a profound change in the shape of future US elections.

The state senate last week voted for a bill that would move the primary to March from June, and both the assembly and Governor Pete

Wilson are expected to give their approval this week.

Although by far the most populous state, California has had relatively little impact on the selection of presidential candidates in recent years, because its primary has been one of the last to take place, usually after each party already has a clear winner.

"The truth is California has essentially been left out of the

presidential nominating process since 1972. It's the biggest, most diverse and arguably the most important state, and it would certainly diminish anything else happening in March," said Mr Bill Carrick, a Democratic political strategist who has worked on both presidential and Californian campaigns.

The March 26 date chosen for 1996 would probably still

put California's primary later than the Super Tuesday cluster of southern states, and later than Illinois and Michigan, but before several important states such as New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

"Two weeks after Super Tuesday and one week before New York - it'll be big," said one California state Republican party official.

Mr Bob Mulholland, of the

state Democratic party, believes other states will follow California's lead and hold their primaries earlier, effectively compressing the entire nominating process into three months.

"If in 1996 we have a primary season running from February to early April, I think that's good for everybody, and especially the contributors," he said.

US Iraq arms probe will go on despite trial move

By Alan Friedman in New York

THE CLINTON administration is moving ahead with a broadened investigation of the US role in Iraq's arms procurement network and has not ruled out the possibility of naming a special prosecutor, a senior Justice Department official said at the weekend.

Mr John Hogan, a special assistant to Miss Janet Reno, the US attorney general, said that last week's decision to cancel the Iraqi loans trial involving the Atlanta branch of Italy's Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) should not be seen as ending US efforts to probe arms-to-Iraq charges.

"My investigation is an ongoing one dealing with the Iraqi procurement network and concerning anyone involved, whether in government or out, whether a current or former official," he said. Mr Hogan, who also heads the Clinton administration's inter-agency BNL task force, stressed that recent US media reports suggesting a special prosecutor had been ruled out were wrong. He said: "No determination has been made yet."

Democratic members of Congress last year demanded the naming of a special prosecutor to examine allegations that Bush administration officials had been involved in criminal

wrong-doing in connection with US policies towards Iraq. The Bush administration rejected the idea shortly before leaving office, but President Bill Clinton promised that Miss Reno would re-evaluate the charges.

Last Thursday, an agreement was reached allowing Mr Christopher Drogoul, the former BNL Atlanta manager, to plead guilty to only three of the original 347 charges against him.

Mr Drogoul, who made \$5m (£3.3m) of loans that helped to finance Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons programmes, had been due to stand trial this week.

Sihanouk may return to throne

By Victor Mallet in Bangkok

PRINCE Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodian head of state, may be reinstated as king under a constitution to be adopted next week. After a weekend of confusion, palace officials yesterday released a faxed letter from Prince Sihanouk to his son suggesting he might be persuaded to ascend the throne.

Prince Sihanouk yesterday also abruptly reversed a decision made only hours earlier to sever ties with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (Untac).

UN officials and western diplomats are not only exasperated by his frequent changes of direction, but concerned that the new constitution being drafted by parliament after UN-organised elections in May will not do enough to uphold democracy and human rights.

Before his overthrow in a coup d'état in 1970, Prince Sihanouk was known for his paternalism and cavalier treatment of democratic institutions. His friendship with the leaders of North Korea and China, where he spends much time, have not improved his international reputation.

He is now in Beijing, and has invited the Untac chief, Mr Yasuichi Akashi, to meet him there on Friday.

Missing the unemployment-deregulation link

THE DEBATE about how to tackle high unemployment has taken a peculiar turn in recent months. The British government, with the help of the European Commission, has appeared able to characterise persistent unemployment as a peculiarly continental European problem; a product of sclerotic and over-regulated labour markets. The US and the UK are thus absolved from continuing blame. Yes, unemployment in these countries was higher in the 1980s than in previous decades. But by embracing an agenda of labour market deregulation, or "flexibility", they claim to have found the solution.

This is certainly the approach that the UK plans to take both in Europe and in the run-up to President Bill Clinton's autumn unemployment summit. Its recent submission to the EC's review on competitiveness in Europe stated: "There has been an upward trend in EC unemployment from around 1970 to the late 1980s and from there to cycle since the late 1980s and an increasing proportion of long-term unemployed people. This is evidence of inflexibility in, and over-regulation of,

labour markets. These factors deter employers from taking on new employees and damage job creation."

But the reality of the Anglo-Saxon labour market performance in the 1980s is different from this rhetoric. First, while the record of the US economy in terms of creating jobs has been superior to that of continental Europe, the UK's record has been less impressive. Over the period 1982-90, UK employment grew by an average 1.5 per cent a year, ahead of 0.9 per cent in the EC as a whole, although behind the US rate of 2.1 per cent a year.

But Britain's peculiarly turbulent recent history has destroyed the employment gains that deregulation might have delivered, as the charts show. Both the US and French economies have steadily been adding new jobs since 1978, although at a much slower pace in France. The UK, by contrast, has experienced an employment rollercoaster: between 1978 and 1983, employment fell by 1.4m; the Lawson boom then replaced these lost jobs and added a net 1.9m more, but since 1990, the

subsequent recession has removed the bulk of the gains, leaving a net addition since 1978 of less than 500,000, 200,000 fewer than France. Over the period 1978-92, US employment grew by 19 per cent, French employment by 3 per cent and UK employment by 0.4 per cent.

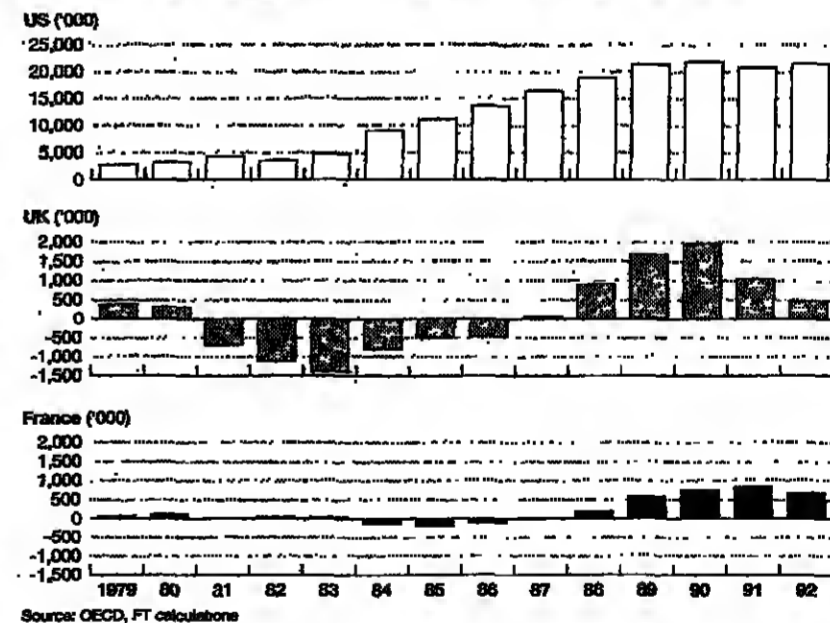
More important, this employment growth has co-existed with persistently lower male employment in both Anglo-Saxon countries. On average over the period 1982-90, and thus excluding the effects of either British recession, 9.7 per cent of British workers were unemployed according to the OECD, higher than in both the US and France. But rising unemployment is only part of the story. Male labour force participation in the US and UK has dropped sharply over the past two decades as many have shifted from being "unemployed" to "economically inactive". The common characteristic of these two groups is that they do not have jobs; all can be classified as "non-employed". On average in the 1980s, 12 per cent of US males aged 25-54, and 14.9 per cent of UK

prime-age males were out of work compared to only 1.1 per cent in France.

The Anglo-Saxon economies have achieved one notable success: by encouraging the creation of relatively low-wage service sector jobs which the male non-employed have shunned, they have delivered many more employment opportunities for women who want to enter the labour market. Over the period 1983-90, female employment in Britain grew by 22 per cent compared to 8 per cent in France. The proportion of women of working age who have jobs rose to nearly 60 per cent in both Britain and the US on average in the 1980s, compared with less than 50 per cent in France and Germany.

But neither the US nor the UK experience suggests that a deregulated, more "flexible", labour market means lower male non-employment. So the British government's willingness to sing the praises of Anglo-Saxon style labour market deregulation seems misplaced.

Cumulative change in total employment since 1978



Edward Balls

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS: PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT

Yearly data for retail sales volume and industrial production plus all data for the vacancy rate indicator are in index form with 1985=100. Quarterly and monthly data for retail sales and industrial production show the percentage change over the corresponding period in the previous year, and are positive unless otherwise stated. The unemployment rate is shown as a percentage of the total labour force. Figures for the composite leading indicator are end-period values.

UNITED STATES						JAPAN						GERMANY						FRANCE						ITALY						UNITED KINGDOM								
Year	Retail sales volume	Industrial production	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Composite leading indicator	Year	Retail sales volume	Industrial production	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Composite leading indicator	Year	Retail sales volume	Industrial production	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Composite leading indicator	Year	Retail sales volume	Industrial production	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Composite leading indicator	Year	Retail sales volume	Industrial production	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Composite leading indicator									
1985	100.0	100.0	7.1	100.0	100.2	1985	100.0	100.0	2.8	100.0	98.2	1985	100.0	100.0	7.1	100.0	100.1	1985	100.0	100.0	10.3	100.0	100.1	1985	100.0	100.0	9.8	104.0	100.0									
1986	100.5	100.9	6.9	98.0	107.0	1986	99.7	98.4	2.8	94.8	105.3	1986	102.2	100.4	6.4	138.4	108.0	1986	100.8	104.1	10.4	108.0	104.1	1986	100.8	104.1	11.2	100.0	100.8									
1987	100.4	100.6	6.1	105.5	108.5	1987	101.3	100.1	2.9	108.5	115.4	1987	104.5	103.1	5.5	107.7	108.6	1987	112.1	106.8	10.9	113.0	110.7	1987	112.1	106.8	10.9	113.0	110.7									
1988	101.8	106.0	6.1	105.1	112.6	1988	122.8	112.9	2.5	136.9	122.6	1988	107.8	107.3	6.0	134.9	113.7	1988	108.0	114.2	10.9	118.0	117.8	1988	108.0	114.2	10.9	118.0	117.8									
1989	112.1	110.7	5.4	108.1	112.6	1989	132.8	118.8	2.2	147.0	126.0	1989	109.5	111.8	9.4	181.1	113.5	1989	116.9	118.7	10.9	118.1	120.1	1989	116.9	118.7	10.9	118.1	120.1									
1990	114.8	112.4	5.2	99.3	111.0	1990	142.0	126.5	2.1	148.8	123.9	1990	110.1	112.9	8.9	165.0	108.5	1990	114.3	118.0	10.3	112.3	121.1	1990	114.3	118.0	10.3	112.3	121.1									
1991	115.0	112.4	5.4	108.1	112.6	1991	146.0	128.4	2.1	144.2	122.3	1991	108.7	113.2	9.5	130.0	110.5	1991	110.8	116.4	9.8	115.2	119.8	1991	110.8	116.4	9.8	115.2	119.8									
1992	112.7	110.3	6.7	82.0	112.3	1992	140.3	120.6	2.2	124.2	122.4	1992	106.9	113.1	10.4	110.6	107.4	1992	116.3	113.8	9.8	111.4	120.4	1992	116.3	113.8	9.8	111.4	120.4									
2nd qtr 1992	2.6	2.8	7.4	60.3	113.8	1992	-3.5	-6.2	2.1	127.1	121.5	1992	-0.2	0.7	10.3	108.4	106.8	1992	9.3	-0.7	10.0	112.7	1.3	-0.2	8.7	69.5	109.3	2nd qtr 1992	9.3	-0.7	10.0	112.7	1.3	-0.2	8.7	69.5	109.3	
3rd qtr 1992	4.0	1.7	7.5	63.1	114.6	1992	-3.8	-6.2	2.2	121.1	121.0	1992	-0.4	-0.2	10.4	110.5	108.7	1992	2.9	-2.1	10.1	111.3	0.8	-0.3	10.1	69.9	108.4	3rd qtr 1992	2.9	-2.1	10.1	111.3	0.8	-0.3	10.1	69.9	108.4	
4th qtr 1992	7.0	3.2	7.2	61.8	117.4	1992	-5.0	-7.7	2.3	115.3	122.4	1992	-1.4	-2.3	10.7	102.3	107.4	1992	2.7	-3.8	8.3	111.4	1.6	0.7	10.4	71.5	110.5	4th qtr 1992	2.7	-3.8	8.3	111.4	1.6	0.7	10.4	71.5	110.5	
1st qtr 1993	3.3	4.4	6.8	62.2	117.5	1993	-5.8	-5.1	2.5	115.1	125.7	1993	-0.1	-3.6	11.0	97.1	105.3	1993	-4.3	9.1	11.4	114.1	3.3	1.5	10.8	73.5	114.4	1st qtr 1993	-4.3	9.1	11.4	114.1	3.3	1.5	10.8	73.5	114.4	
2nd qtr 1993	3.7	6.9	6.3	63.7	118.8	1993	-4.3					1993	-1.0	-4.2				1993	-4.0				3.1	2.8	10.4	74.1	114.5	2nd qtr 1993	-4.0				3.1	2.8	10.4	74.1	114.5	
June 1992	2.3	1.5	7.8	60.7	113.8	1993	-6.5	-3.9	2.1	126.2	121.5	1993	-1.8	0.3	10.4	115.8	108.5	1993	-4.7	-3.8	n.a.	112.7	0.5	-2.4	9.8	69.0	109.3	June 1992	-4.7	-3.8	n.a.	112.7	0.5	-2.4	9.8	69.0	109.3	
July 1992	3.0	2.2	7.5	59.9	114.0	1993	-4.0	-6.4	2.2	122.7	121.4	1993	-2.8	0.6	10.4	112.0	108.8	1993	2.3	-0.2	n.a.	112.3	-0.5	-1.3	10.0	71.8	108.7	July 1992	2.3	-0.2	n.a.	112.3	-0.5	-1.3	10.0	71.8	108.7	
August 1992	4.4	1.8	7.5	61.2	114.0	1993	-4.8	-8.1	2.3	122.0	120.7	1993	-3.0	0.3	10.3	111.0	107.9	1993	1.1	0.2	n.a.	111.9	0.1	0.2	9.7	70.7	108.1	August 1992	1.1	0.2	n.a.	111.9	0.1	0.2	9.7	70.7	108.1	
September 1992	4.8	0.8	7.4	62.4	115.5	1993	-5.4	-4.9	2.2	121.1	122.0	1993	1.9	0.5	10.5	107.8	108.7	1993	5.1	-4.4	n.a.	111.3	2.0	0.1	10.2	67.3	109.4	September 1992	5.1	-4.4	n.a.	111.3	2.0	0.1	10.2	67.3	109.4	
October 1992	8.8	2.3	7.9	60.6	115.5	1993	-5.4	-4.9	2.2	121.1	122.0	1993	0.1	0.4	10.6	105.8	106.6	1993	2.5	-1.4	n.a.	111.0	2.1	0.8	10.2	68.7	108.1	October 1992	2.5	-1.4	n.a.	111.0	2.1	0.8	10.2	68.7	108.1	
November 1992	6.8	0.2	7.2	62.4	117.1	1993	-5.7	-8.8	2.3	110.5	122.3	1993	-5.2	-3.3	10.7	102.5	108.0	1993	5.7	-5.7	n.a.	111.2	1.8	0.5	10.4	71.0	109.7	November 1992	5.7	-5.7	n.a.	111.2	1.8	0.5	10.4	71.0	109.7	
December 1992	6.8	0.2	7.2	62.3	117.4	1993	-7.4	-7.8	2.4	118.6	122.4	1993	-4.8	-4.3	5.2	223.9	107.1	1993	-0.2	-4.4	n.a.	111.4	1.0	1.0	10.8	74.7	110.5	December 1992	-0.2	-4.4	n.a.	111.4	1.0	1.0	10.8	74.7	110.5	
January 1993	7.7	4.8	7.0	60.4	118.2	1993	-3.5	-7.8	2.3	109.5	123.3	1993	-4.0	-3.5	10.1	107.1	109.9	1993	11.0	-3.9	n.a.	111.1	1.9	1.5	10.7	72.1	112.9	January 1993	11.0	-3.9	n.a.	111.1	1.9	1.5	10.7	72.1	112.9	
February 1993	2.8	4.4	6.9	63.5	117.8	1993	-5.8	-5.8	2.5	112.6	124.1	1993	-4.7	-11.8	5.5	210.1	109.9	1993	-4.5	-4.3	n.a.	113.2	2.9	1.6	10.5	73.0	113.3	February 1993	-4.5	-4.3	n.a.	113.2	2.9	1.6	10.5	73.0	113.3	
March 1993	2.7	4.3	6.9	61.7	117.8	1993	-8.2	-2.0	2.3	123.1	123.7	1993	-2.0	-8.5	5.7	208.4	107.4	1993	4.1	-5.0	11.2	96.5	106.9	1993	4.1	-5.0	11.2	96.5	106.9									
April 1993	4.1	3.9	6.8	62.4	118.8	1993	-4.1	2.3	109.0	126.8	1993	-2.4	-9.0	5.8	209.2	107.9	1993	0.8	-3.1	11.4	95.4	108.3	1993	0.8	-3.1	11.4	95.4	108.3										
May 1993	3.8	4.0	6.9	63.1	118.9	1993	-4.8					1993	-8.0	-8.2	5.9	208.0	108.8	1993	-3.4	-3.5	11.5	89.8	106.8	1993	-3.4	-3.5	11.5	89.8	106.8									
June 1993	3.6					1993	-4.8					1993	-4.1	-8.6				1993	5.8	-4.0									June 1993	5.8	-4.0							

Percentage of the total labour force. Figures for late complete releases.

Statistics for Germany apply only to western Germany. Data supplied by Datastream and WEFA. Retail sales volume data from national government sources except Japan and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). Refers to total retail sales except France and Italy (value series deflated by OECD using CPI). 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NEWS: UK

Foreign orders already surpass last year's record of £5.2bn

Arms exports 'a great success'

By David White

FOREIGN orders for British weapons so far this year have already surpassed last year's record of £5.2bn, Sir Alan Thomas, the Ministry of Defence's export chief, said yesterday.

Describing the export performance as "a great and unsung success story", he vigorously rebuffed suggestions that the government had been lax in vetting where its arms went.

Sir Alan, who has not been called to testify to the Scott Inquiry into supplies of arms and related equipment to Iraq in the 1980s, said it was "nonsense" to depict Britain as a big supplier to President Saddam Hussein.

"The UK had come 'a very poor fifth' among the world's

five main arms-producing nations in supplying Iraq between 1985 and 1990, he said, adding that it had not sent lethal equipment.

"No other country in the world has a more responsible policy or practice," he said. He added that the UK obeyed international controls and regulations on arms sales "both to the letter and in spirit".

Sir Alan, who heads the MoD's Defence Export Services Organisation (Deso), was speaking at a preview of the Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition at Aldershot, Hampshire.

He emphasised the MoD's increasing reliance on export customers to help defray the cost of its own weapons. "Our future capability depends on our export success," he said.

Officials expect the UK's share of the international defence market to exceed the 20 per cent it reached for the first time last year. This year's export figures had been boosted by the sale of 48 Tornado bombers to Saudi Arabia, expected to be worth some £4bn including spares and support.

The UK ranks as the world's No3 arms exporter after the US.

Despite rising exports, the exhibition reflects the general decline of the UK defence industry.

Exhibitions of British land and sea weapons were previously held separately in alternate years. The decision to merge them was made two years ago after a naval show which was judged to have too

few exhibitors to be worth repeating. However, this year's combined show, organised by the Deso and paid for by industry, is if anything even smaller.

Open to invited guests only, it presents the incongruous spectacle of naval exhibits at an army base some 45 miles from the nearest coast.

The grey superstructure of a futuristic warship looming over the outdoor stands is a half-scale canvas mock-up constructed by British Aerospace as a token of its ambitions to expand in the naval business.

A pool has been dug to give the impression that the pretend ship, built around a core of portable cabins, is floating. Delegates from about 60 countries are expected at the exhibition.

UK country fans hurtin' and hopin' no more

By Rachel Johnson

UNTIL last week, UK fans of country and western music had few opportunities to hear good ole fashioned songs - hurrin', hopin', and copin' tunes with audible lyrics and proper melodies that last three minutes and no longer.

But last Friday, the Radio Authority awarded a licence to London Country Radio, the first 24-hour station of that genre in the UK. It hopes to be broadcasting to a potential audience of 7m by next April.

This followed the announcement that Country Music Television (CMT) Europe - with 300,000 UK subscribers since its introduction last year compared to 17m in the US - went on the Astra satellite as part of Mr Rupert Murdoch's new BSkyB package.

"These two developments provide a major new promotional outlet for the country product," said Mr Martin Satterthwaite of the Country Music Association, the Nashville-based trade association with a UK membership of 300.

Mr Adam Sleaf, manager of the country section at Tower Records' flagship London store, said CMTV would "change everything" by making country music and its stars visible for the first time. The two new outlets were keeping pace with a taste for "good songs with neither no rap nor grunge base," he said.

While sales of country music albums are 73 per cent higher than they were in 1991, the British Phonographic Institute says that country and folk account for just 3 per cent of UK record sales. This contrasts sharply with the US, where the genre's unstoppable rise has led the UK music industry to jump on country's bandwagon.

Country music traces its origins to the poor smallholders many from the Scots-English border who settled in the southern Appalachian mountains in the 18th century. The genre still has a long way to go in the UK, which will have two country music outlets next year. In the US, 2,500 radio stations play the white man's blues 24 hours a day.

Major faces test on taxes

By David Owen

PRIME MINISTER John Major was last night facing a new test of his leadership as the Tory right stepped up its efforts to head off possible tax increases in the November Budget.

As Mr Major prepared to return to Downing Street tomorrow after his Portuguese holiday, right-wing ministers were insisting that tax and spending should be discussed on Thursday at the first cabinet meeting since the summer break.

Downing Street yesterday described the meeting as "very much a reporting cabinet", with ministers outlining summer developments in their

departments in general terms.

But right-wing ministers were adamant that the debate over the best way of narrowing the £50bn public sector borrowing requirement should not be kept off the agenda, arguing that the general political situation could not be discussed without talking about spending.

An acrimonious debate over whether further tax rises should play a part in the government's drive to reduce the budget deficit has rumbled on in Tory ranks all summer.

Already some are warning that the differences which have come to light could prove as damaging as the rift on Europe which dominated the last parliamentary session.

Yesterday brought a string of fresh contributions to the argument, with Mr David Mellor, a former Treasury minister, saying the option of tax increases had "got to be kept up". Mr John Townend, right-wing chairman of the Tory backbench finance committee, said supporters in his Bridlington constituency were telling him they did not elect him to put taxes up. He was "heartened by the fact that the battle for spending cuts is making progress".

Sir Edward Heath, former prime minister, said Mr Major should tell cabinet colleagues that if they did not go along with government policy they should "quietly resign or retire".

Coal mines attract few buyers

By Michael Smith

PRIVATE-SECTOR mining companies have made bids for fewer than half of 19 pits shut or mothballed by British Coal in its closure programme.

The deadline for the last five pits to be put out to tender is tonight, with the likelihood that only one will be the subject of a bid that involves mining. The five are Coventry, Shirebrook in Nottinghamshire, Taff Merthyr in Mid Glamorgan, Parkside on Merseyside and Sharncliffe in West Yorkshire.

As the final deadline approaches it is probable that only eight of the 19 stand a chance of reopening as mines. The others have either received no bids or are the subject of tenders that involve the use of surface assets only.

The government will use the private sector's lack of enthusiasm in its argument for closing so many pits. However, the shortage of bids will reinforce fears that the privatisation of British Coal next year will prove difficult. Decisions on bids are expected to take at least another month.

Number of new graduates finding work falls to 43%

By John Authers

EMPLOYMENT prospects for new graduates have worsened again, figures released today indicate.

They show that the proportion of graduates finding long-term employment by the end of the year they left university fell to 43 per cent last year.

It was the fifth successive annual fall according to the figures from the Universities' Statistical Record. In 1986-87, 60 per cent of graduates found long-term jobs. The latest figure is lower than the 48.5 per cent reached in the trough of the last UK recession in 1980-81.

Last year the proportion believed to be totally unemployed, without even temporary work, rose from 9.4 per cent to 10.6 per cent.

Graduates also shifted from industry - the destination for 23 per cent, down from 26 per cent the year before - and towards commerce - up one percentage point to 31 per cent.

Employers' organisations, including the Confederation of British Industry, predict that

companies will start to recruit graduates again before economic recovery is fully under way, and graduate recruiters earlier this summer detected a "small but discernible upturn" in demand. This has yet to be reflected in any figures.

The fall in employed graduates is partly accounted for by a rise in the numbers taking further studies. This was the destination for 30.9 per cent of graduates, compared with only 24.6 per cent six years earlier. There was also a 6.3 per cent increase in the total number of graduates.

Architecture - up 28.6 per cent - saw the most vigorous expansion. Graduate unemployment was lowest, at less than five per cent, for medical and dental, and students of education. That confirmed predictions, made recently by teacher training bodies, of a shortage of trained teachers once the recession ends.

Librarianship was the subject least likely to lead to a job, with 20.8 per cent of graduates still looking for either a job or further study. Architecture (15.4 per cent), humanities (14.6

per cent) and mathematics (14.4 per cent) were next.

Despite complaints of a shortage of science graduates from industry, 13.4 per cent of physical scientists were still without either a job or another course - more than the overall average of 11.6 per cent.

Only "old" universities, and not former polytechnics which have become universities, are included in the figures.

"Academic snobbery" is preventing disappointed university applicants from taking up courses in further education colleges, Mr John Patten, education secretary, alleges in a letter published today.

According to Mr Patten, writing in a letter to the chairman of the Conservative backbench education committee: "Universities are not the only institutions to offer degrees. Over 300 of the newly-independent further education colleges now offer higher education courses, 130 of them at degree level."

He likened resistance to further education colleges to the "academic snobbery" which deterred students from applying to polytechnics twenty years ago.

Union leader looks across the pond

Robert Taylor looks at efforts to reverse declining union membership

MR JOHN MONKS this week becomes general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, which begins its 125th annual gathering in Brighton today. He wants to draw on lessons from the US labour movement in his efforts to reverse the trend of declining union membership in Britain.

"I admire the toughness and professionalism of the American unions," he said. "They have to live and work within a difficult business environment in the face of large heavily anti-union multinational companies."

The 48-year-old from Manchester, who takes over from Mr Norman Willis at the end of the week as TUC general secretary after 23 years in the organisation's bureaucracy, is particularly keen on emulating US labour recruitment campaigns that make much use of computers for co-ordination and seek broader alliances in the community.

The TUC plans to take the initiative by launching a number of campaigns to publicise the relevance of trade unionism to the estimated 66 per cent of workers who no longer belong to unions.

A test campaign will be held in Bristol, where a number of unions intend soon to launch a co-ordinated recruitment drive. Local union activists will be

mobilised to try to persuade workers who do not belong to unions to join them. If the Bristol campaign succeeds, the TUC will shift its focus to other cities. Immediately after this week's congress the TUC will prepare its campaign to reach the 6m trade unionists estimated to have their membership subscriptions deducted by their employer under the so-called check-off system out of their pay.

Under the new Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act every trade unionist has to approve within the next 12 months to union check-off. Many union officials fear this could produce a dramatic fall in membership as workers decide not to renew their subscriptions. Unions will be encouraged to move their members to the direct debit system of payment as a way of protecting their finances.

The TUC also plans to concentrate its campaigning efforts in four priority areas - health and safety, pensions,



John Monks in Brighton yesterday: he admires the toughness of US unions

vocational and trade union training and equal rights.

"We want to make the TUC the kind of organisation that people admire and respect talking good sense and saying things that chime in with their experience," said Mr Monks.

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The key Swiss bank

ECONOMICS

German monetary policy in the spotlight

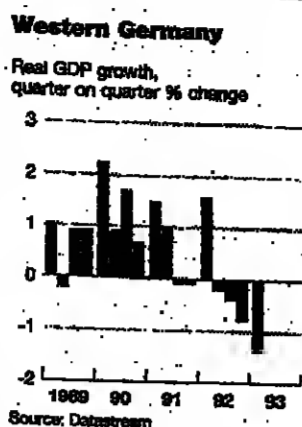
GERMANY will be the centre of attention this week with parliament resuming work after the summer recess today and the Bundesbank's decision-making council meeting again on Thursday.

The debate over whether the Bundesbank should or should not ease its monetary policy will be fuelled by the expected publication tomorrow of second quarter gross domestic product figures and July retail sales figures during the week.

The consensus among economists is that the economy stagnated in the second quarter. If true, that would lend support to the government's belief that the recession has bottomed out. But the outlook for recovery is bleak, with rising unemployment and continued self-doubt in Europe's biggest economy.

The weak state of the Japanese economy will be highlighted in the Bank of Japan's latest "Tankan" report on Friday. By coincidence international monetary officials meet in Paris that day to prepare the way for the annual International Monetary Fund meetings at the end of the month. Japan could again find itself under pressure to expand its economy.

The main economic statistics and events of the week follow. The figures in brackets are the



median of economists' forecasts from MMS International, the financial information company.

Today: US, Labour Day market holiday.

UK, July credit business (up £200m), housing starts and completions.

Spain, August official reserves (\$47bn).

Tomorrow: Germany, second-quarter western German GDP (unchanged on quarter).

Belgium, EC monetary committee meets in Brussels.

Wednesday: US, July whole-sale trade, consumer credit (up \$2.5bn); Federal Reserve Board releases tan book.

UK, chancellor Kenneth Clarke and Bank of England governor Eddie George discuss

monetary policy. Treasury releases monthly monetary report.

Canada, August help wanted index (88).

Thursday: US, initial claims week ended September 9 (330,000); state benefits week ended August 28; 1993 real capital spending; second-quarter productivity; money supply figures for week ended August 30 (M2 up \$1bn).

Japan-US deputy ministers meet in Washington.

Germany, Bundesbank council meets.

UK, CBI distributive trades survey. Chancellor Kenneth Clarke at Scottish CBI dinner.

Canada, August housing starts, seasonally adjusted annual rate (163,000); July motor vehicle sales (up 3.5 per cent on month); June labour income (up 2.3 per cent on year).

Australia, August unemployment rate (10.8 per cent).

Sweden, August consumer prices (unchanged on month, up 4.6 per cent on year).

Friday: US, August producer prices (up 0.2 per cent on month), ex-food and energy (up 0.2 per cent).

Japan, Bank of Japan Tankan report, 1993 Tankan capital spending estimate (down 5 per cent); August manufacturing diffusion index (minus 54 per cent), non manufacturing (minus 42 per cent)

France, August preliminary consumer prices (unchanged on month, up 2.2 per cent on year). G7 deputies and OECD's Working Party Three meet in Paris.

Canada, August unemployment rate (11.5 per cent), employment (up 0.2 per cent on month); July department store sales (down 2 per cent on year).

Norway, August consumer prices (down 0.1 per cent on month, up 2.3 per cent on year).

During the week: Japan, August trade balance customs cleared (\$7bn surplus).

Germany, August final cost of living (unchanged on month, up 4.2 per cent on year); July manufacturing orders (unchanged on month), retail sales (down 2.5 per cent); June trade balance (DM3.5bn surplus), current account (DM2bn deficit).

France, May trade balance (FFr5.5bn surplus); July M3.

Netherlands, August consumer prices (up 0.6 per cent on month, 3 per cent on year).

Switzerland, August federal consumer prices (up 0.3 per cent on month, 3.4 per cent on year), unemployment (4.7 per cent).

Australia, July money supply and credit.

Peter Norman

RESULTS DUE

GLAXO, reporting full-year results on Thursday, might sound more cheerful about its prospects in the US following President Bill Clinton's more conciliatory message about health care reforms this week.

Pre-tax profits for the year ended June are forecast at around £1.65bn against £1.43bn a year earlier.

Underlying sales growth will be in the low teens but sales of new drugs might be somewhat disappointing. A final dividend of 13p is likely making 20p for the year (17p a year ago).

Cadbury Schweppes is expected to deliver results in line with management's bullish assessments of trading in recent months when it reports its first-half figures on Thursday.

Many analysts forecast pre-tax profits of at least £180m, up from £128m last time.

Forecasts for Prudential, reporting on Wednesday, vary widely from £218m-280m pre-tax against £248m a year earlier. An increase in dividend to about 4.5p from 4.1p is also forecast.

Better life insurance performance will be overshadowed by further heavy losses on re-insurance.

Whether George Wimpey, reporting on the same day, returns to an interim pre-tax profit from a loss of £7.2m a year earlier hangs in the balance. Some analysts forecast a small profit, others a small loss. Its second half will be stronger given the housing pick up.

Blue Circle should report on Thursday interim pre-tax profits slightly ahead with the dividend unchanged.

AMEC's interim pre-tax profit

is likely to be slightly lower on Wednesday than last year's £10.6m.

Following a recent trading statement, Hillsdown Holdings' results tomorrow will be carefully scrutinised.

It said it would achieve operating profits of not less than £80m, but it has its work cut out to improve the profitability of its diverse food businesses.

Coats Viyella on Thursday is forecast to report a moderate increase in interim pre-tax profits to about £54m from £48.5m a year earlier.

UK COMPANIES

■ TODAY COMPANY MEETINGS:

Adams & Harvey, Standard House, 15-16, Bonhill Street, E.C. 1, 11.30

Calsonic, 15, Bonhill Street, E.C. 1, 11.30

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DIVIDEND & INTEREST PAYMENTS

■ TODAY

Adam & Harvey 7p

Amec, Express Credit 8p, Dual Currency

Senior Sec. 1986 £80,000

Bank of Greece 10 1/4% 2010 £5.375

Cardiff Property 0.85p

Demo Eps. 6% Un. 32/07 04

Drayton Far Eastern 0.125p

Electrocomponents 5.9p

Kendrick 0.155p

Mifal & Co. Bond & Flg. Rate Nts. 1998

£2,600,000

Moorgate Inv. Tr. 3.5p

Partridge Fine Arts 1.2p

Renovon Inc. 4 1/2% 1994 (with Writ.)

£243.75

Salford 0.40p

Sainsbury (J) (Channel Islands) 5 1/4%

Cap. Bds. 2005 £212.50

Scottish & Newcastle 11.07p

Templeton Emorg. Markets 1.7p

Whitehead 9 1/4% Rd Dd 101/06 £4.875

Woodhead Bldg. Society Flg. Rate Nts.

1998 £155.77

■ TOMORROW

Chitney 4.3p

Expochem 14 1/4% Nts. 1993 A\$1.45

ENSCERCH \$0.05

Finning Budgeting Inv. 1p

Freemant 2p

Gen. Motors Acceptance Corp. of Can.

7 1/4% Nts. 1997 £57.70

Do. 11 1/4% Nts. 1995 £3118.75

Lockheed \$0.55

River & Merc. Extra Inc. 1.56875p

Rockwell Int. \$0.28

Sarven Fin. And Inv. Gld. Step-Up Flg.

Rate Nts. 2002 £27.06

Sweden (Kingdom of) 6 1/4% Nts. 2003

\$85

■ WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 9

Bank of Ireland Undated Var. Rate Nts.

\$1,102.08

Barclays Overseas Inv. Gld. Flg. Rate

Nts. 2004 £127.78

Brit. Gas Inv. Fin. 6 1/4% Gd. Nts. 1998

\$83.75

Centric Automobiles Receivables Secn.

Nts. 2 Class A Flg. Rate Nts. 1997

£150.04

Finbury Smaller Co's. Tr. 1.1p

Flg. Int. Fin. (Australia) Flg./Food Rate

Gld. 2001 \$487.15

Independent Inv. 0.8p

Lat. Services 4.7p

Local Authority Short-Dated 10 1/4% 1993

£5.4226

Natl. Australia Bk. Sub. Var. Rate Nts.

2000 £160.04

Natl. Westminster Bk. Var. Rate Cap.

Nts. 2000 £158.11

Nationwide Bldg. Society Flg. Rate Nts.

1998 £155.77

1995 £153.75

Pfizer Leisure 2.37p

Renold 7 1/4% 2nd Deb 12/07 £3.8125

3 Gp Gld Flg Rate Nts 1987 £180.08

UK 7 1/4% Treas. 2003 £1.6652

Do. 10 1/4% Treas. 2003 55

■ THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 8

Anglian Group 5.8p

Anheuser-Busch \$0.35

Birds Eye Foods 1.7p

Cardo Engineering 3.4p

City Electronics 1p

Dunlop Printing Sciences 2.65p

Formator 10.04p

MANAGEMENT

Time was when industry's involvement in schools was regarded as a good public relations wheeze, paid for out of the same budget as charitable donations. Today, however, UK companies are realising there are important career development benefits for their managers.

Sir Allen Sheppard, chief executive of Grand Metropolitan, is one business leader who supports participation by employees in community action and education programmes. "It's a big part of career development," he said in a recent interview with the FT (Management Page, July 2). "I like to see people in the trenches, not stuck in the back office. It's better than 1,000 management courses. It's playing the game for real."

On Sir Allen's analysis, sending staff on educational programmes is an act of enlightened self-interest - training is helped, while the company's image, and the long-term health of the community around it, improve. Sending employees into classrooms can also be a valuable first step to finding good new recruits.

The bodies that co-ordinate education and the private sector are now trying to ensure that their programmes will be useful for industry participants. These include Young Enterprise, which uses corporate managers as advisers to "boards" of 16-18-year-olds running dummy companies for vocational business qualifications, and Understanding Industry, which arranges for managers to give sixth-formers lessons in how industry works.

Research by Oxford University's Faculty of Education found that companies are using secondments to the Young Enterprise scheme as a formal and informal means of developing management skills. Work as a YE adviser also conforms with the standards of the Management Charter Initiative, the government-backed body for establishing common standards of managerial training, which is backed by 1,614 companies.

Each Young Enterprise "company" has a board of directors composed entirely of students who raise start-up capital of £250, and a workforce taken mainly from friends at school. Over the next year, they attempt to make as much money as possible from business activities. The children gain vocational qualifications, and have the chance to win prestigious prizes in competition against other youthful companies across the UK and Europe.

Managers from industry are required as advisers for each managing board. Last year, more than 5,000 advisers were seconded to Young Enterprise companies.

Corporate training managers say a young manager can derive excellent experience by overseeing the



BBC news presenter Martyn Lewis with finalists from the Young Enterprise Europe competition in Oxford

Back to school for industry

Managers are sharpening up their skills through educational placements, reports John Authers

birth of a small company, run by usually highly enthusiastic teenagers. Midland Bank now has more than 400 Young Enterprise advisers, and uses the scheme as a standard appraisal tool for any recruits who hope to become small business advisers.

According to Oxford University's research, each adviser must play roles as team players and managers, but must also work as a "catalyst", consultant and manager of learning. They must also assess and audit their students' work. It is a big commitment, involving one two-hour session each week with the youthful boards of management, plus duty on some Saturdays towards the end of the year when the companies take their wares to trade fairs and make presentations.

But former YE advisers find the experience invaluable. Isobel Day, remuneration and benefits officer for Guinness Brewing in north London, advised a company called Le Pose at Queens Park Community School in Brent. In a turbulent year of existence it appointed four separate managing directors, and drastically revised its accounts several times. Day said she learnt to take an overview of the range of a company's functions - not otherwise easy in a company the size of Guinness - and also gained insights into

the problems of team leadership and co-ordination.

Under Day's guidance, Le Pose eventually raised enough money by offering car washes and making Christmas cards to go to France and take advantage of the then favourable exchange rates to buy cheap goods, which the children then sold in north London. Its campaign came to a climax with a highly regarded presentation to a group of business leaders, including Martin Sorrell, chief executive of WPP, which had been organised by Business in the Community.

According to Day, Guinness has now established Young Enterprise involvement as "very much a useful career development tool". This judgment is shared by United Biscuits, another big employer in Brent, which also involves its managers in YE programmes.

Understanding Industry organises a less onerous programme that also allows junior managers to gain extra perspectives on their work.

UI courses are offered as a bloc to Sixth Form colleges, and lead to a diploma at the end of the course. During the term, the aim is to introduce students to all sectors of industry, and to each of the various management functions. Different volunteer managers from industry address the class each week to

explain their job, and to take them through model exercises.

Past volunteers attest that the experience of explaining themselves to a group of curious sixth-formers helped their communication skills. They must act as ambassadors for their companies, but avoid technical jargon, and also review closely what their job is aiming to achieve. Students also have an ability to ask questions that managers would otherwise never have asked for themselves.

Like Young Enterprise, UI aggressively promotes its programmes as useful training for managers, as well as for students. Powerful backers for its latest campaign include Allied-Lyons, Esso, Marks and Spencer, Thorn EMI and Boots.

Allied-Lyons expects all its managerial employees to take on external community positions, with a particular emphasis on school governorships and participation in Understanding Industry courses. The company sees educational involvement as a part of overall managerial development, and an opportunity to widen contacts.

Educational involvement, though, does not come cheap. Allied-Lyons calculates that each secondment of a manager to take a UI course amounts to a gift of £80 for the school.

Changing face of the MBA

As demand for courses falls, business schools are reassessing their role, writes Tim Dickson

A recent cartoon in the Christian Science Monitor conveys an uncomfortable message for modern managers. It pictures the IBM "juggernaut" careering off the road and a clearly bemused "driver" under the caption "I don't understand... we all went to the top business schools".

Management education is going through a rough patch on both sides of the Atlantic. Demand for MBA courses is down 17 per cent in the US and by roughly the same figure in the UK. Companies are sending fewer managers on executive programmes, and contracting higher education budgets mean fewer faculty jobs for academic staff. The more honest and forward-looking business school heads, however, acknowledge that economic recession is not the sole culprit. Current uncertainty, they concede, has as much to do with changing perceptions of the value of an MBA.

One such realist is Jim Schmotter, dean of the College of Business and Economics at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, and a former associate dean and director of international studies at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University. Addressing human resource directors at a one-day conference at Manchester Business School last Thursday, Schmotter identified the main trends in North American management education with disarming frankness.

Reinforcing the cartoon theme - that maybe the emperor has no clothes - Schmotter almost maddeningly cited a New York consultant who advises Fortune 100 companies on their MBA recruitment. "She [recently] observed that companies are now hiring MBAs primarily because of the work experience they had before entering school because they see no value that we on the campus add. And they are hiring far fewer. Further, they do not see business school faculty as qualified to help them solve important business problems."

Whether you agree with this bleak assessment or not - a Lehigh dean and most of his and-

ence would presumably strongly beg to differ - Schmotter's point is that views like this are part of the market reality. How are business schools responding?

Schmotter outlined four strategies. ● Do nothing, or as he put it, "get down into my tented bunker and wait for the economy to rebound". Blaming others - naive students and short-sighted corporations - is part of this approach.

● Expand courses with features that look attractive, such as outward-bound leadership programmes, overseas trips or "non-credit" sessions on speaking and etiquette. Schmotter argues that business schools have no comparative advantages in these areas.

Business school heads acknowledge that current uncertainty has as much to do with changing perceptions of the value of an MBA as the economic recession

and none of it affects the curriculum or faculty.

● Gear up the public relations machine, proclaim commitment to the 21st century and try to get front page news coverage every day. Schmotter's verdict: "Again, style over substance."

● Finally, and most positively, introduce genuine reform. The task is not to be underestimated but he suggests that "schools such as Michigan, Case Western Reserve, and Babson College are rethinking what they do - and from all we hear Harvard is soon to join this trend."

Schmotter believes that business schools will have to change because global corporate restructuring is resulting in fewer jobs of the kind MBAs have traditionally held. Schools will have to add more value to students' employability and alter their expectations. They will have to develop more

real partnerships with companies. Shrinking resources will put a premium in business schools on the sort of concepts normally taught, rather than acted on, by academics: productivity, total quality and continuous improvement to name but three.

Business school "constituents", meanwhile, will increasingly continue to insist on a market-driven, rather than a product-driven mentality. Trends towards tailored, company-specific programmes are appearing in MBA education, too, and rankings are here to stay.

MBA schools are also realising they cannot cover the waterfront, and specialisation - practised with success by the Thunderbird School and the University of South Carolina - is according to Schmotter the key to market share.

The European model, he concedes, is finding converts in the US and schools there "face sophisticated competition... for the best students", "MBA education," he adds, "is a global phenomenon."

That in part explains why much of Schmotter's analysis is echoed in Europe: the growing PR awareness is particularly marked, and course reform is exemplified by the growth of distance learning, the sometimes discreet trimming of two-year MBA programmes and the development of intra-European networks. League tables and other forms of independent ranking may become more widespread, not least if the impasse over plans for a common European system of accreditation is not broken.

Schmotter's thesis is one of opportunity as well as challenge, and in the UK there is arguably plenty of both. A recent Institute of Management survey reveals almost a third of UK companies admit to spending no time on management training, while other evidence suggests most UK companies are pleased if they devote 2-3 per cent (against the 25-30 per cent cited by many Japanese executives).

As with the shoe salesman who returned disconsolate from Africa to say that everybody there went around in bare feet, such statistics can be read in more than one way.

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS

Newspaper Restoring holy building

BALFOUR BEATTY has commenced work on a £20m management contract to provide a fully serviced printing plant for the Scottish Daily Record and Sunday Mail at "Fifty Pitches" in Cardonald, Glasgow.

The works comprise a press hall, reel store, inserting area, despatch and publishing area, associated ancillary buildings together with all external works. The site is planned to be operational by the beginning of 1995, which will coincide with the 100th birthday of the Daily Record.

Traffic congestion Mid Glamorgan County Council has awarded CHRISTIANI & NEILSEN the £11m plus contract for building the new Pontypridd inner relief road. Construction starts soon and completion is due within three years.

The relief route - a mixture of new construction, road widening and improved traffic management - will relieve congestion in the town centre of Pontypridd. Traffic from the Rhonda Valley will be speeded up on its way to the A470 Cardiff-Merthyr Road, via a new interchange to the east of the town.

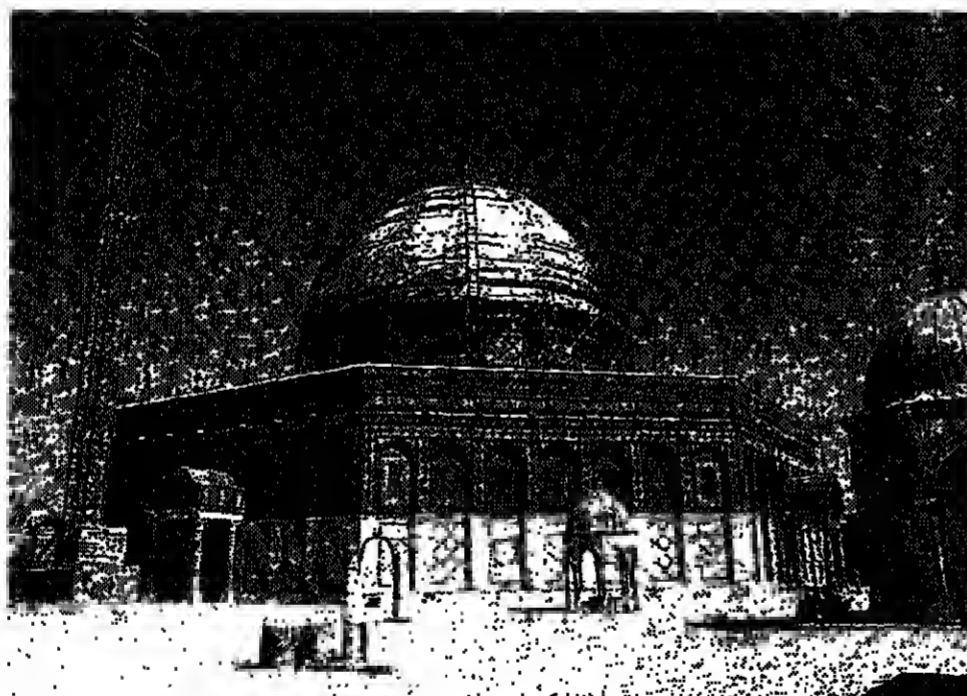
Bridge ventures

BRIDON ROPES has been awarded two bridge contracts worth £2.5m. The two cable stayed bridges are the Second Severn Crossing, downstream of the current Severn Bridge, and the Glebe Island Bridge, across Johnstone's Bay in Sydney Harbour, Australia, which will be of a similar scale to the existing harbour bridge.

Hanoi airport

JOHN LAING INTERNATIONAL has signed an agreement with the government of Vietnam for the design, construction and operation of a new international passenger terminal at Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi.

The agreement allows a joint venture partnership between Laing and the Northern Airports Region in Vietnam to be the owner of the terminal.



METADALIC, part of the C.P. Group based in Hayes, has been awarded a contract worth in the region of £300,000 to supply materials and full technical support to the gold plating of a new dome on the famous Dome of the Rock mosque (pictured above) in the old City of Jerusalem.

New superstore for Berkshire town

The P&O company BOVIS CONSTRUCTION has begun work on a £10.5m contract to build a 67,000 sq ft superstore for Safeway in Reading, Berkshire.

Situated on Basingstoke Road, the new store will also offer a range of other facilities including a petrol station, post office, restaurant, baby changing rooms and a dry cleaners. Originally a rubbish dump and later a car showroom and servicing facility, the site

required special preparation before building work could begin. This involved clearing waste materials and stripping off contaminated top soil up to a depth of 6m.

As well as the construction of the store, petrol station and creation of a 667 space car park, Bovis is managing associated roadworks which will create a new roundabout and access to the store.

Bovis will also fit out 35,000 sq ft of sales floor area in a

The restoration of the dome, worth in the region of £5m, is proceeding to schedule with completion expected in December.

15-week programme. Work carried out will involve the installation of all shop floor services including underfloor heating, refrigeration units, checkouts, cash transfer systems and security systems. All back-up services for the coldrooms, freezers, ambient storage, bakery and food preparation areas will also be installed.

Building work is due for completion in February 1994 and the store will open in March 1994.

£36m orders won by Lovell Group

The three companies within the construction division of the LOVELL GROUP have won contracts valued together at £36m.

Within this total, the Lovell Construction workload of £19.3m includes a variety of office, transport and residential work. Among the office contracts are a £1.9m refurbishment for London & Leeds Estates in the Strand, bomb damage re-instatement of £1.6m in the City, a £1.1m project for the Automobile

Association at Basingstoke and fitting-out for Zeneca at Stanhope Gate W1.

In the transport field, work at Heathrow and Stansted Airports, Euston Station and the Central & District Underground lines combine to total £2.9m.

Residential contracts of £6.55m include work for the City of Westminster on the Queen's Park Estate W10, the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust at Beckton, English Churches Housing Group in Westmin-

ster, the Civil Service College at Ascot, and the University of Brighton.

Walter Lilly & Co has obtained work totalling over £7m in the London area. New clients include QPR Football Club, Queen's Park United Reformed Church and Nonsuch High School in Cuen.

In the Midlands and North of England, Bullock Construction has been awarded contracts worth £9.6m, mainly in the educational and housing sectors.

£35m work awarded to Try Group

TRY GROUP has been awarded contracts valued at £35m for its construction, refurbishment and civil engineering businesses, two thirds of it through negotiation.

Among £15m worth of work for Try Construction is the £5.7m refurbishment of "C" wing, at Wandsworth Prison, for the Home Office. Cells will be upgraded and group association areas refurbished. All mechanical and electrical, lighting and alarm systems are to be renewed and a new roof installed.

The £2.5m refurbishment of the Queen's Club tennis and leisure centre in Hammersmith involves upgrading the pavilion and constructing an extension to provide a multi-function room, kitchen and staff canteen.

Try Build has secured £10m worth of work, half of it arising from three contracts, the construction of St Joseph's Hospice, Hackney (£1.8m), a retail fit out at Basildon for British Home Stores (£1.9m) and the refurbishment of Friern Barnet School for the London Borough of Barnet.

CEMINDIA, part of Trafalgar House Construction, has secured new orders worth £10m.

The largest is a £5m contract from the Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board for the civil works for a coal handling plant which forms part of a new thermal power project.

The company has begun constructing diaphragm walling so that deep excavation for the wagon tippers, unloading hoppers and emergency reclaim hoppers can take place.

Work on the installation for the batching plant and piling work for the stacker reclaimer system and other conveyor systems is currently under way. The project is scheduled for completion at the end of next year.

The company has also won a £1.1m order to construct a berth for the Calcutta Port Trust at the port of Haldia in eastern India.

PEOPLE

Rhodes switches to Thorn lights

Thorn Lighting Group has lost little time in making fresh main board appointments following its sale to Investcorp, the Bahrain-based investment bank, which in June this year paid £162m to Thorn EMI in what was effectively a management buy-out. According to Investcorp, Thorn Lighting will be seeking a flotation in the medium term.

Phillip Rhodes (right), a 46-year-old chartered accountant, has joined as chief executive covering the UK, Ireland and central European territories; Michael Frye, 47, chief executive of the engineering and machine tool manufacturer B. Elliott, becomes a non-executive director with special responsibility for Thorn Lighting's architectural lighting initiative and design issues.

They join a main board of



seven, and also a management executive board of nine.

Rhodes was a main board director of the commercial support services group BET between 1989-92, overseeing (as divisional chairman) the group's textile rental, contract catering and facilities management in the UK, US and

Europe. Before that he held various posts with Guinness.

"There are lots of similarities in the marketing mix" of both Guinness and Thorn, says Rhodes, a believer in general management "being a universally applicable skill". Thus although there might seem to be a substantial leap from spirits to lights and "our customers are not consumers in the same way, we nevertheless have to serve them efficiently and well".

As happened with its sale of Kenwood Appliances and Thorn EMI Software to their managements, Thorn EMI retains a stake in the new Thorn Lighting company. The parent company receives £137m in cash, a 12 per cent equity stake, worth £8.7m, and £16.3m in subordinated loan notes.

Bodies politic

Bridget Bloom, formerly agricultural correspondent of the Financial Times, has been made a part-time commissioner of the Forestry Commission. The appointment comes as the future of the Commission is

being reviewed by an inter-ministerial committee, with privatisation an option.

Bloom, 56, was the FT's Africa and later its defence correspondent, before taking up the agriculture beat. She retired from the paper last year and is a part-time commissioner of the Meat and Livestock Commission.

While writing for the FT she was strongly critical of government forestry policy, until the abolition in 1989 of tax concessions that had encouraged wealthy individuals to invest in large-scale tree-planting.

Seven of the 11 members of the Forestry Commission, its board of directors, are non-executives.

The performance of the non-executives is strongly criticised in a submission by the Institute of Chartered Foresters to a government review. The

Institute said it suspected that improvements in the running of the Commission had been "achieved in spite of the non-executive commissioners, not because of them".

Barry Goddard, executive director of the Council for Travel and Tourism, has also been appointed secretary general of THE DUTY-FREE CONFEDERATION.

James Gilmore has been appointed deputy director general of CAB INTERNATIONAL, an intergovernmental organisation providing services to agriculture and the conservation of natural resources.

John Hott, md of R.S. Kennedy and Co, has become a companion of the INSTITUTION OF GAS ENGINEERS.

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Lady Ponsbury of Shothrede has been appointed Waterways Ombudsman, largely, she believes, on the strength of her experience as a barrister and arbitrator. Every year millions of people use Britain's canals: boaters, anglers, and freight carriers.

If they have cause to complain of maladministration by British Waterways, the nationalised body that runs the canals, reservoirs, towpaths and buildings, they have recourse to BW's complaints procedure. If still not satisfied, Lady Ponsbury is their last resort.

No one really knows how busy she may turn out to be: British Waterways says it keeps no overall record of how many moaners it gets annually. But Lady Ponsbury is not one of them: she acknowledges never having taken a canal boat holiday, "though I have walked along a good few towpaths".

During her three-year contract, Lady Ponsbury, 61, plans to stir the waters a bit: "British Waterways will have to abide by my decisions, and if they don't like them, too bad - they're stuck with me," she says.



Brian McMaster's Edinburgh festival

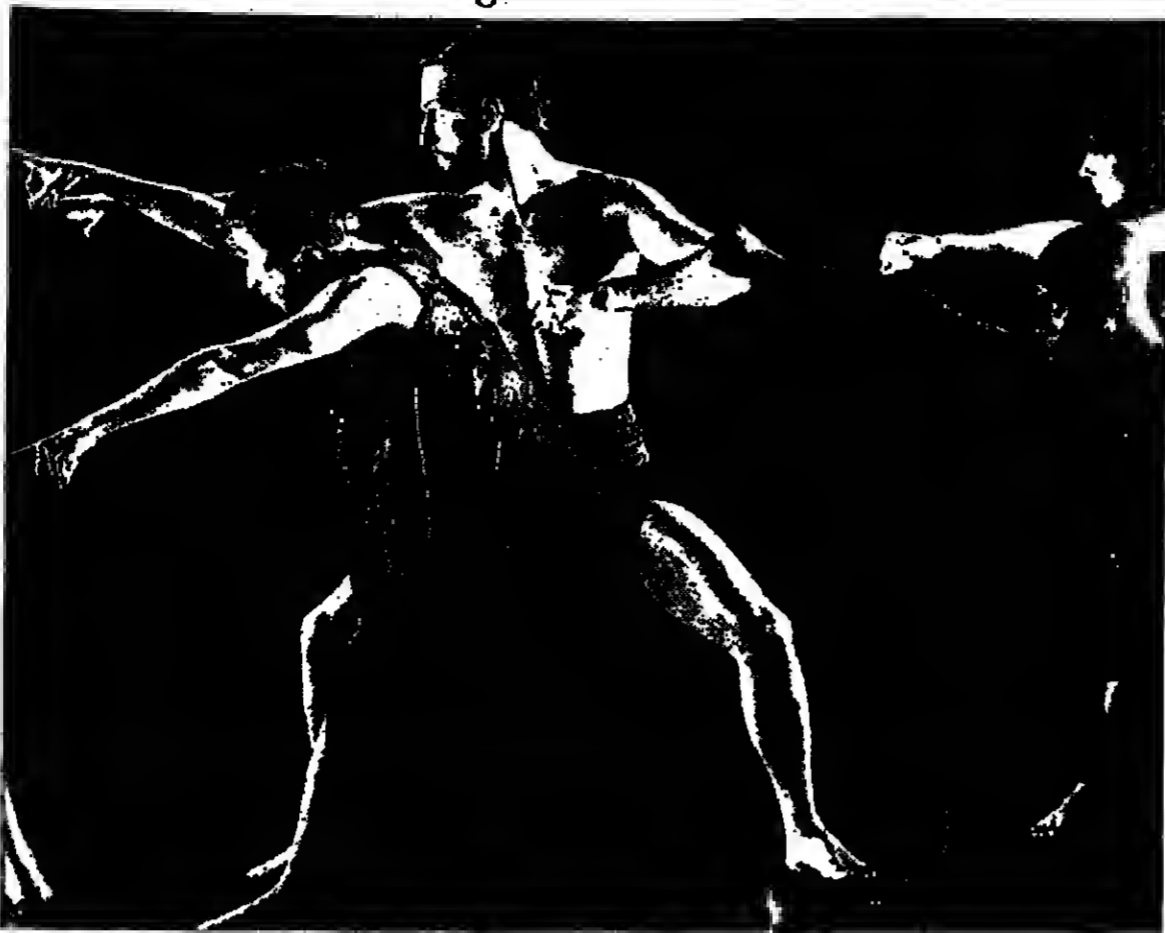
Alastair Macaulay reflects on the highs and lows of this summer's three-week event

This was the first Edinburgh festival that I "did" from first to last - from opening concert (August 15) to final performance (September 4) - and kept up an average of 3 shows or more per day. It had an unusual stream of accidents, starting with the mysterious fire at the Playhouse, which continued right through to the last week, during which two sopranos and one mezzo carried on despite announced throat complaints. It also had its no-nos (the most lacklustre opening concert anyone can recall) and its hushes (the theme of James MacMillan's music "in focus").

Yet Edinburgh's remains a uniquely beloved festival, not least because of Edinburgh itself. Some of the critics who complained about the event in 1993 nonetheless spoke of their great happiness in being here again. One reason for that was this year's glorious weather, which made the architectural and natural beauties of the city stand out with exceptional definition. Even at night-time, the moon hung low in the sky above the castle - most memorably on the evening of the great fireworks concert.

The Edinburgh festival is also held dear for three other reasons: its success in combining multiple arts, its function as a meeting-point of all manner of people interested in the arts, and the lively co-existence of official and fringe events. So what if Aeschylus was maulled by a charlatan? So what if *Julius Caesar* kept being drowned by airplanes, tractors and a grain-dryer? So what if the three Lenz plays showed very well before now? You had only to go to Holbein, or the Lindsay Quartet, or *The Broken Jug*, and you fell in love with the arts all over again.

But this has been true of Edinburgh for donkeys' years. What of the festival under Brian McMaster? Well, you could tell that he had an audacious penchant for the unorthodox last year, when he launched his regime with Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*. (Nobody dared make the old cliché "Are you sitting comfortably?" Then I'll play you some Schoenberg.") He



Dissidence and modernity: Mark Morris Dance Group at the Edinburgh festival

has suffused his festival with a mentality both international and fringe - as I realised last Friday, after a day that had included a morning recital by a German thalidomide basso, a matinee play-reading of Jakob Lenz's *The Soldiers*, an evening concert of minor Janáček and minor Schubert, and a late-night concert by a Catalan protest singer.

For many of us, the main fun of the Edinburgh festival lies in what it teaches us that we never knew before. These days, the festival has specific themes, and this appeals to the eter-

nal student in me; I arrive looking forward to a three-week course in subjects about which I know too little. But 1993's themes were an odd bunch. The Schubert/Janáček theme was designed less to cover either composer properly than for compare-and-contrast purposes, not often to stimulating effect. The Verdi "from first to last" theme omitted so much of Verdi "in between" that it proved a wish sandwich. And the MacMillan theme has put scores of us off his music for good. Next year's themes, it is said, will include Goethe and Beethoven.

which Edinburgh should be able to serve judiciously.

The most successful 1993 theme was the bringing together of the work of four of today's most celebrated foreign theatre directors - Peter Sellars, Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage, Peter Stein (though it is revealing that the festival's most perfect - and most beautifully acted - production of all was Thomas Langhoff's account of Kleist's *The Broken Jug*). Here is a theme I would love to see taken further. Imagine, for example, a festival where we saw four or more interna-

tional directors' contrasting treatments of Shakespeare or Ibsen plays; or Greek tragedies; imagine a festival that gave us every Chekhov play, each one staged by a different master.

For some of us, there is another, more specific, reason why we cherish the Edinburgh festival: namely, the 11am concerts at the Queen's Hall. Six mornings per week you can start the day with chamber music or a recital, and, even when the music is not to your taste, the act of sitting and attending in quiet to music is the best possible daily therapy - perhaps especially to those of us who spend much of the rest of each day focusing more upon the other arts. It is strange but true that, since much of the Queen's Hall music is of highest standard, you really can feel that your life has been enlarged a little, several days a week, before lunch.

Let me not sound too lyrical about this year's assortment. Apart from MacMillan (or vey), the Gould Trio and Steven Osborne simply were not of international standards. Or, Osborne - like MacMillan - is a good Scots boy; but this was the second year in which we watched his tense and unauthoritative way with piano classics. As for the Gould Trio, their phrasing lacks firmness, and their violinist is slipshod. But the recitals by Anne Sofie von Otter, the Lindsay Quartet, Yuri Bashmet, Dawn Upshaw, Andras Schiff, Thomas Quasthoff, Sylvia McNair - each of these was a special event, memorable and moving.

This year (and last, and next), there has been one ideal Edinburgh artist, the choreographer Mark Morris - who is both international and fringe, theatrical and musical, alternative and classical, and who is plainly one of the superlative artists of our day. His theatrical visions - just see *Grand Duo* and *Home* - are equal to those of the above theatre-directors. There is enough dissidence and modernity in Morris to suit him to McMaster's spirit, and McMaster has responded by making sure that Morris's dances are accompanied by world-class musicians. Sight and sound are thrillingly, and festively, conjoined.

Sponsorship / Antony Thorncroft

Fears for live events funding

The world, well, that scrap of it known as the arts sponsorship world, was amazed when the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts came up with a figure of \$84.4m for corporate expenditure on the arts in 1991-92 and predicted that there might even be a slight increase this year. If ABSA wants to ensure that its forecast comes true it need only add in the \$4.5m that Classic FM has raised through sponsored programmes in the past year.

It is hard to argue that the Classical Gas programme, sponsored by British Gas on the station; Classic Verdict, which appears thanks to Clerical & Medical; and the station's Summer Music Festival programme, sponsored by Kenco (impressed by rival Nestlé's success in underwriting the charts on pop commercial radio) are not a form of arts sponsorship.

Certainly the latest initiative, a £100,000 investment by Prudential to ensure that its sponsorship of the Prudential Awards for the Arts is better known, is designed to help the arts world. Through the coverage, the 4.5m listeners of Classic FM will hear all about the activities of short-listed companies like Théâtre de Complicité, Opera North, and the Shobana Jayasingh dance troupe, and will be encouraged to see them.

There is a fear that the money spent on sponsoring arts programmes on television and radio, which is now being actively encouraged by the media involved, will take away funding traditionally put behind live events. There is the possibility that some companies will feel happier investing in media, which they understand through their advertising expenditure, rather than in sponsorship. But TV and radio coverage will need the events of the living arts to promote, and anything that gets business thinking about the arts as a marketing outlet, rather than traditional brand and corporate advertising, is a good thing.

For Sadlers' Wells based around dance, and helped English Estates with its important educational work. In future such time-consuming advice will be costly. ABSA's task is to ensure its hundreds of corporate members that they can still look to it for free day-to-day guidance on sponsorship matters.

The Barbican is the first arts organisation (festivals excepted) to take full advantage of the extra cash available under the re-vamped Business Sponsorship of the Arts scheme, which this year has \$4.5m of government money to hand out as encouragement to arts sponsors. Since April the maximum top-up for an arts company with a sponsor in tow has increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000, and, more importantly during a year it can make four applications (instead of two) and receive a maximum of \$50,000 in state aid, double the old limit.

The Barbican secured its \$35,000 when the German bank Norddeutsche put up the same amount to underwrite an exhibition of the work of Munch, and quickly reached its \$50,000 limit when Ley's backed the exhibition of photographs by Bill Brandt, which also opens this month.

So far nine arts companies have qualified for the \$35,000 boost, mainly festivals, like the Brighton and the Covent Garden, but also exhibitions, like the Holbein show at the National Gallery of Scotland, backed by Capital House Investments, a first time sponsor. Another first time sponsor qualifying for \$35,000 is BIFA, which is supporting the Council for Music in Hospitals, a number of events this year.

Applications for BSIS cash provide a good monitor of the state of the arts sponsorship industry. ABSA, which administers the scheme, is actually turning away more applicants this year, especially those arriving late. All told it expects to receive a record 600 requests this year, suggesting that arts sponsorship has ridden out the recession better than most.

Tate & Lyle, as a member of the Per Cent Club, devotes a proportion of its profits to good works, of which the arts merit 15 per cent. Most of this, £120,000 over the past three years, has naturally gone to the Tate Gallery, founded by Henry Tate in 1897.

The link is due to end next month but already the search is on for a continuing connection. In the past Tate & Lyle has sponsored the Friends of the Tate, providing the seed corn money which has enabled the Friends to grow in numbers and revenue. The Friends' contribution to the Tate Purchase Fund now approaches £100,000, and included the commissioning of the Patrick Heron coloured glass window in the new Tate St Ives.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has just returned from a twelve concert tour of South Africa. It is the first visit to the country by an important British arts company for many decades. The tour was sponsored by Nedbank, a leading South African banking organisation, for an undisclosed but "substantial" sum, presumably around £100,000.

The Proms/Paul Griffiths

Asko Ensemble

IF YOU schedule a programme of new music at ten on a Thursday night, you get the audience you might expect: this was a Queen Elizabeth Hall concert with the gloom, and the boom of a nine-baths empty Albert Hall around it. There at the middle of the Asko Ensemble of Amsterdam were playing brilliantly under the young British conductor Jonathan Nott.

Of the four pieces, there were recent chamber concertos, all with the virtuoso soloist being chased and flattered by musicians of similar skills and intensities. Ligeti's Piano Concerto came off best, perhaps because its fascinations drew the ear into intimacy through all the echoing space. Ligeti has related his astonishing music of the last decade to fractal geometries, and the Piano Concerto supports that connection with its swirling detail, its ceaselessly reinterpreted patterns and its suggestions of things we know: Baroque toccatas, the exultant pulsations of Afro-Caribbean folk music, waltzes of fading Romantic pathos, brassy jazz.

As this performance demonstrated, it is also a comedy especially for the percussionist, who tails the piano in a manner at once manic and silly, and who brings the whole

thing to a sudden stop with a sharp knock on the woodblock. But everyone was on excellent form, from the racing-fingered Roland Pontinen at the piano to the poetic double-bass player.

Tha other mini-concertos both featured the violinist Irvine Arditti. Luca Francesconi's *Ritmo nuovo* was again music of echoes, but more deliberately so, the work of a Berio pupil in having a soloist who is part Paganini, part folk fiddler playing into the reverberations of a small orchestra. Brian Ferneyhough's *Terrain*, new last year, lost most from the scale of the place. Mr Arditti's solo line, almost uninterrupted through the 12 minutes of the piece, was full of nimble wonder, but diluted by distance from fervour (the characteristic first marking is "tense, electrified") into something more like grace, as if the violin were a bird skimming over a landscape of rolling harmonic hills and flatter things from an octet borrowed from Varèse's *Océanade*.

That homage was followed by the bursting, vital reality of *Intégrales* which Mr Nott ably heaved and steered without a score through all its splendour, crackling percussion configurations and lonely, finely played oboe melody.

ALMOST the best line in the new play at the Royal Court is the first. The central character sits motionless in his chair long enough to be convicted of hamstringing. Then he opens with: "If you are waiting for me to break the silence, you will be deeply disappointed."

This is also the last line of the play. For given that the central character is Sigmund Freud, you would expect a certain synthesis, synthetic or otherwise. In the meantime we have been on a rare helter-skelter that opens like a mystery-thriller, moves quickly into farce, then has long periods of semi-seriousness.

Enjoyment of Terry Johnson's *Hysteria* will depend almost entirely on your mood on the night. Having returned from duty at the Edinburgh festival, I was looking for fun and a touch of southern frivolity, and very good some of it turns out to be. It is pleasing to hear that Freud had recently been to see *Rocky Horror* in the West End and had laughed four or five times. Since laughter for Freud was clearly a serious matter, that is a lot.

I also enjoyed seeing Johnson emulate some of the best of the farce tradition: a naked girl, the daughter of the subject of one of Freud's case studies, hidden in the closet, and Salvador Dali, wonderfully

Theatre/Malcolm Rutherford

Hysteria at the Royal Court



Henry Goodman (Freud, seated) and David de Keyser in *Hysteria*

played by Tim Potter, prancing about in his underclothes. The inevitable line takes a long time to come, but is worth waiting for. Old and doddery in London in 1959, Freud trips

the same team that gave us John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation* in this theatre: Phyllida Lloyd as director and Mark Thompson as an excellent designer of sets.

Others, however, may prefer the more serious parts which centre on Freud as analyst and theorist and possibly Freud as a fraud. It is alleged that he changed his views when he saw how oddly they fitted with his own family background.

I am unable to comment on how far that is true. The central theme that Freud and Dali were both frauds, though of a different kind, seems slightly implausible. Freud at least had a degree of seriousness which has passed into almost everyone's consciousness. Still, the equation between the two is something that theatre audiences in the right mood might like to discuss afterwards. There is also a Jewish doctor who goes on about Freud and Jewishness and a thesis that Moses was an Egyptian which, the doctor says, ought not to be published in the late 1930s. Some people might like to take that as a serious theme as well.

For my part, I preferred the funny bits. Henry Goodman is a compelling Freud, but the mix is not quite right.

Royal Court Theatre (071) 790-1745.

INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

BERLIN

BERLIN FESTIVAL

● This year's theme is Japan and Europe. New Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo gives a concert tomorrow at the Philharmonie. Ichikawa Ennosuke's Kabuki Theatre group gives performances at the Deutsche Oper from Thurs till Sun. Jutta Mai Dance Ensemble can be seen at Schlosstheater Unter den Linden on Wed, and at Staatsoper Unter den Linden on Fri and Sat. The Tokyo Ballet is in residence at the Deutsche Oper from Sep 21 to Oct 7. An exhibition entitled Japan and Europe 1543-1929 opens at Martin-Gropius-Bau on Sun, with more than 500 objects tracing the development of Japanese art and the influences which Japanese and European artists have had on each other.

● Claudio Abbado conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra tonight at the Philharmonie in a programme of Rakhmaninov and Tchaikovsky, with piano soloist Liya Zilberstein. Other concerts at the Philharmonie and Kammermusicals

this week feature Cherubini Quartet (tonight and Wed), Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with Lorin Maazel (Thurs), Ensemble Modern (with Henze's new Requiem on Fri), Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado (Fri and Sat), and Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra with Vladimir Ashkenazy (Sun). Next week's programme includes concerts conducted by Klaus Tennstedt and Roger Norrington. ● At the Schauspielhaus, Heinz Holliger conducts the Berlin Staatskapelle on Thurs in works by Holgger, Berg and Mahler (with violin soloist Thomas Zehetmair), and Gustav Kuhn conducts Berlin Radio Orchestra on Sat in Rakhmaninov, Beyer and Brahms. ● L'Homme qui, Peter Brook's latest theatre piece, runs at Berliner Ensemble till Sep 15. ● The festival runs till Sep 30. The festival office is at Budapeststrasse 48 (information 254890; ticket reservations 2548 9100).

OTHER EVENTS

The 1993-4 season at the Komische Oper begins on Fri with the first night of Harry Kupfer's new production of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan*. Repertory over the following two weeks includes Kupfer productions of Giulio Cesare, Gluck's *Orfeo*, Così fan tutte and Les Contes d'Hoffmann, all sung in German (229 2556). Staatsoper under den Linden has Les Contes d'Hoffmann tomorrow and I Capuleti e i Montecchi on Wed and Sat (200 4762). A new production of Cabaret starts previewing at Theater des Westens on Sat, first night Sep 17 (3190 5193). The ensemble of the

Deutsche Oper is in Japan until mid-October. ● Tickets and information for theatre, revues, concerts and nightclubs shows available from City Center Theatre and Konzertkasse, Kurfürstendamm 16 (tel 882 6563; fax 882 6567) and Theaterkasse im Europa-Center (tel 261 7051; fax 261 9295).

NEW YORK

THEATRE

● Later Life: A.R. Gurney's much-admired comedy about a man and woman who meet after a 30-year separation. Now previewing, opens on Thurs (Weatstide, 407 West 43rd St, 307 4100). ● The First Lady: an adaptation of Wedekind's Pandora's Box, about an uninhibited sexual force that drives men and women to distraction in patriarchal Europe, starring Elise Stone (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, 677 0080). ● Einstein: a one-man show about the renowned physicist, written and directed by Joel Seimeier, starring Richard David Sprinkle. Till Sep 18 (The Acting Company Studio Theatre, 420 West 42nd St, fourth floor, 718-852 5824).

● Angels in America: the first half of Tony Kushner's epic, free-wheeling play about gay life, Reagan-era politics and Mormonism. Not to be missed (Walter Kerr, 219 West 48th St, 239 6200). ● The Sisters Rosensweig: Wendy Wasserstein's play, a comedy with serious undertones, about the reunion in London of three American

Jewish sisters (Ethel Barrymore, 243 West 47th St, 239 6200). ● Kiss of the Spider Woman: a Kander and Ebb musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, directed by Harold Prince with a star performance from Brent Carver (Broadhurst, 235 West 44th St, 239 6200). ● Tommy: a musical written and composed by Pete Townshend based on the classic 1969 rock opera by The Who and directed by Des McAnuff (St James, 246 West 44th St, 239 6200). ● Fool Moon: a comic entertainment written by and starring David Shiner and Bill Irwin, with music by the Red Clay Ramblers (Richard Rodgers, 226 West 46th St, 307 4100).

● Cleanse: David Mamet's much-talked-about drama about a university professor and a young female student, with Jim Frawley and Mary McCormack (Orpheum, 128 Second Ave, 307 4100). ● Blood Brothers: Willy Russell's musical about twins who, separated at birth, eventually meet and fall in love with the same girl (Music Box, 239 West 45th St, 239 6200).

MUSIC/DANCE

State Theatre The first new production of New York City Opera's current season is Tippet's *The Midsummer Marriage*, first night on Thurs. Christopher Keene conducts a staging by Francesca Zambello. Repertory also includes *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Carmen* and *The Mikado* (870 5570). Avery Fisher Hall Harry Belafonte gives concerts on Thurs, Fri, Sat. The New York Philharmonic

Orchestra launches its new season on Sep 22 with a Beethoven and Shostakovich programme conducted by Kurt Masur, with violin soloist Itzhak Perlman (875 5030). Carnegie Hall The season begins on Sep 23 with a concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch, with violin soloist Midori (247 7800). Metropolitan Opera The 1993-4 season opens on Sep 27 with a gala celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Met debuts of Luciano Pavarotti and Plácido Domingo (382 6000).

PARIS

MUSIC/DANCE

● The Orchestre de Paris opens its 1993-4 season on Sep 15 at Salle Pleyel with the first of two programmes devoted to the music of Richard Strauss. The first programme (repeated Sep 16 and 18) features Maria Ewing in the final scene of *Salome*, while the second programme (Sep 22, 23, 25) features Margaret Price in the Four Last Songs. Next month's concerts are conducted by Giljili, Boulez and Bychkov (4565 0786). ● The Opéra Bastille reopens on Sep 23 with a new production of Der fliegende Holländer, staged by Werner Herzog and conducted by Myung-whun Chung, with Falk Struckmann in the title role and Sabine Hass as Senta. Roman Polanski's production of Les Contes d'Hoffmann is revived on Oct 9 with David Pénard in the title role (4473 1300). ● Felicity Lott stars in a new

production of Der Rosenkavalier, which opens the Châtelet's season on Sep 24 (repeated Sep 27, 29, Oct 3 and 5). Adolf Dresen produces, Armin Jordan conducts and the orchestra is the Philharmonie (4028 2840). ● The dance season at Palais Garnier reopens on Sep 29 with a gala including choreographies by Beany, Lander and Forsythe (4742 5371).

FESTIVAL D'AUTOMNE

Highlights of this year's festival (Sep 21-Dec 30) are Bob Wilson's stage adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* starring Isabelle Huppert, Büchner's *Woyzeck* staged by Jean-Pierre Vincent, Giorgio Strehler's touring production of Goldoni's *La baruffa chiozzotte* and Peter Sellars' modern version of Aeschylus' *The Persians*. The dance programme features the Twyla Tharp, Lucinda Childs and Bill T. Jones companies, plus Jan Fabra and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. The music programme has an American slant, with a special focus on Steve Reich, John Adams and John Cage (4296 9694).

THEATRE

Théâtre de Gennevilliers opens the new season on Sep 15 with Shakespeare's *King Lear*, directed by Bernard Sobel (4793 2630). Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers reopens on Oct 1 with Eugene O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms*, directed by Thomas Langhoff (4614 7000). ● A 24-hour recorded telephone guide to Paris entertainments is available in English by dialling 4952 5356.

ARTS GUIDE

Monday: Berlin, New York and Paris.
Tuesday: Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Chicago, Washington.
Wednesday: France, Germany, Scandinavia.
Thursday: Italy, Spain, Athens, London, Prague.
Friday: Exhibitions Guide.
European Cable and Satellite Business TV (All times are Central European Time)
MONDAY TO THURSDAY Super Channel European Business Today 0730; 2230 Monday Super Channel: West of Moscow 1230. Super Channel Financial Times Reports 0630. Wednesday Super Channel: Financial Times Reports 2130. Thursday Sky News: Financial Times Reports 2030; 0130. Friday Super Channel: European Business Today 0730; 2230. Sky News: Financial Times Reports 0530. Saturday Super Channel: Financial Times Reports 0930. Sky News: West of Moscow 1130; 2230. Sunday Super Channel: West of Moscow 1830. Super Channel: Financial Times Reports 0930. West of Moscow 0230; 0530. Sky News: Financial Times Reports 1330; 2030.

Samuel Brittan

How the wealth of nations changes



One advantage possessed by economic analysts at the heart of the US, well away from the short-term preoccupations of Washington and New York, is that they have more incentive to study underlying processes. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis takes advantage of its situation to do just this, and it devotes its Spring 1993 issue of its Quarterly Review to a study of changes in the wealth of nations.

The slogan of the growing gap between rich and poor nations has been with us for a long time. But the analysis in the review suggests that it is a highly misleading one. After carefully inspecting standard international data for the period 1980-85 it concludes that there is indeed a huge disparity in the performance output of different countries. The five countries in 1985 with the highest per capita real GNP had output 29 times as high as the five with the lowest real GNP.

For comparison, the per capita output of the most prosperous US state, Connecticut, was only twice as high as the poorest, which was Mississippi. On the other hand the disparity in output between the least and the most productive workers in the US, as in most other western countries, was almost as great as that between rich and poor nations. (Relative productivity is here measured by per differentials, which would encourage some egalitarians.)

On the other hand there was no tendency for the international gap either to grow or to shrink. Measured in terms of relative GNP per capita, the gap was much the same in 1985 as in 1980. But this does not mean that countries were frozen in their relative positions. On the contrary, there were big changes in the identity of those at the top and bottom of the world distribution.

There are of course well-known difficulties in taking relative GNP figures as indices of living standards. It is

DEVELOPMENT MIRACLES AND DISASTERS, 1960-85

Country	Factor change	Country	Factor change
Saudi Arabia	3.32	Zambia	2.63
Lesotho	3.19	Mozambique	2.63
Taiwan	2.60	Madagascar	2.50
Hong Kong	2.59	Angola	2.38
South Korea	2.40	Chad	2.13
Egypt	2.38	Liberia	2.04
Congo	2.18	Ghana	2.00
Japan	2.10	Zaire	1.96
Singapore	2.08	Nicaragua	1.85
Syria	1.89	Afghanistan	1.75

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

doubtful if a city dweller in the US could physically exist on an income one twenty-ninth of the national average. But, for all their failings, the GNP estimates provide at least a starting point for analysing international differences.

The table shows some of the main development "miracles" and "disasters". It is based on the relative wealth of each country, defined as the ratio of its GNP per head to that of the US. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis goes on to define what they call the "factor change" as the ratio of relative wealth in 1985 to that in 1960.

At the head of the miracle countries comes Saudi Arabia, whose relative wealth has risen by a factor of more than three. One only has to utter the word "oil" and pass on. Next in the list is Lesotho in south-east Africa, which had an enormous growth opportunity, as in 1960 it figured as the poorest country in the world. The Congo is another surprising miracle case which must have started from a pretty low base. These examples show the snags that exist even in the most sophisticated of international league tables. The other miracle countries are more predictable: Japan and some of the south-east Asian "tigers", plus Egypt and Syria.

Among the development disasters where relative wealth fell was Zambia, which fell by a factor of more than two and a half. Sadly it is followed in the disaster league mostly by other African countries. The two non-African basket cases are Nicaragua and Afghanistan - both ravaged by civil war.

There are no prizes for guessing which part of Europe might have graduated to disaster status if the tables could have been extended to 1993.

Explanations of these relative wealth changes are inevitably more speculative. The authors show once again that mechanistic models based on amounts of standardised labour and capital used do not explain comparative performance. The unexplained residual has often been attributed without adequate evidence to human capital, which is natural enough for writers working in higher education. But the Minnesota authors are unconvinced and suggest the missing factor is one that they call business capital. This is not the same as physical investment, but is some mixture of entrepreneurship and organisational skill.

The Minnesota attempt to model this factor as a kind of inverse of taxes on profit and capital is less convincing and is carried out in terms of abstract algebra rather than examination of actual data. Why do US economists have to downgrade history, culture and plain luck in an exaggerated attempt to be useful policy advisers?

But for all its imperfections, the Minnesota Review analysis is a big advance on the typical middle-headed condemnation of the west for the poverty of the poorer countries or for the conventional guilt-ridden responses.

Research Dept, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, PO Box 291, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55480-0291

Britain, according to many trade unionists, is an increasingly unpleasant place in which to work. A shrinking number of employees, they argue, enjoys "steady jobs" offering security and prospects, while a growing army of workers - from highly skilled professionals to labourers - is subject to the hire-and-fire whims of hard-pressed, or plain ruthless, employers.

Much will be heard about this Britain at the 125th annual gathering of the Trades Union Congress which opens today in Brighton. But not many of the 1,000 delegates will be reflecting on why, if working life is so unpleasant, the number of people reaching for the protection of the trade unions is falling. Even in the late 1980s, when more than 1m jobs were created, the trend was downwards. Now, TUC-affiliated unions represent only 30 per cent of the workforce.

Moreover, the row over the return of the Electricians Union to the TUC and other domestic tiffs will distract delegates from pondering what trade unions have to offer their other customers: employers, not to mention the national economy in the latter 1990s.

One person with longer-term strategy on his mind is Mr John Monks, 45, the thoughtful new general secretary of the TUC, who promises a relaunch of his battered organisation and, he hopes, the whole trade union movement.

The arrival of a new leader is generating a flutter of optimism among the trade union elite that the movement can make itself more relevant. On the face of it, however, its prospects are gloomier than ever. Despite the loss of political influence under Tory governments and the more restrictive legal framework of the past decade, British unions still have an influence greater than warranted by their actual numerical strength in large manufacturing plants and the public sector.

But that position is now under serious threat. Financial constraints, caused by falling membership, will be exacerbated by government moves to curb the automatic deduction by companies of trade union dues from wages.

More worrying for the unions is the way in which the withdrawal by employers of union recognition, once the exception, is becoming common. The oil industry provides the latest example.

"In some workplaces, unions have become so marginalised

On the lookout for the vision thing

David Goodhart on the need for fresh ideas at this week's annual gathering of the battered TUC

that they are disappearing with scarcely anyone noticing. In many other workplaces the union presence is poised on a knife edge, with employers now considering whether the hassle of getting rid of them is worthwhile," says Mr Alan Cave, a management consultant and former head of research at the GMB general union.

Many would regard that view as exaggerated, but certainly some union officials fear the devolution of decision-making to local managers in the public sector will threaten this heartland of trade unionism.

In addition, in both public and private sectors, employers are increasingly removing their most-prized employees from collective bargaining and offering them individual contracts. These trends towards decentralisation may be irreversible, but there are other reasons for the decline of trade unionism which the TUC could address. In particular, union leaders need to improve their record of recruitment in those areas where new jobs are being created and among women, who are filling most new vacancies.

"Unions are still not female-friendly organisations and, until recently, they have done very little on pushing for equal pay," says one woman union activist.

The middle-ranking supervisor or lower manager of "middle England" - pinpointed by Mr Monks as another key group needing union support - also still regards the unions with suspicion.

"Ideally we would start again with a new name and without the cloth cap associations which the unions still have," says one TUC official. "This should be a great time for union recruitment. The fact that it is not is more our own fault than down to employers or the government."

Middle England is not at ease with the unions' collectivist traditions or its Labour party links. Mr Monks, unlike the leaders of some of the biggest TUC unions, is keen to



John Monks: thoughtful new general secretary of the TUC

distance the TUC from the Labour party and turn it into a much more apolitical lobbying organisation.

Even Mr Monks, however, is enough of a traditionalist to balk at the argument that unions must accept the decline of collective bargaining and concentrate resources on assistance to individual employees, for example in negotiating individual employment contracts.

However, there is evidence that the tailoring of union activities to individuals has widespread support among union members. A 1992 survey by the Nupe public services union found that, even among relatively low-paid health service and local government workers, advice on disciplinary issues and grievances came ahead of pay bargaining on the list of reasons for joining a union.

Unions are already providing

such legal services for many members and are effective at negotiating redundancy deals. Making a virtue of that and selling union membership as an individual's workplace insurance may run against the collectivist grain for many unions, but it may be a necessary ingredient for survival.

Yet to remain an effective mass-membership organisation, as opposed to just a political lobbying organisation as in France, will also require the union movement to keep at least tacit support from employers. That is a point Mr Monks acknowledges, boasting that some of the most efficient and successful companies in Britain recognise unions - including most of the UK's 50 leading exporters.

According to Mr Robbie Gilbert, head of employee relations at the Confederation of British Industry, unions still have a role in channelling the

employees' "voice", especially where there are large groups of workers who do not qualify for individual treatment.

By increasing employee security, unions can also help in the management of change. At Rover Group, for example, the unions helped to negotiate a "no compulsory redundancy" agreement during the transition to Japanese-style working practices. That has helped to allow considerable flexibility within the company because employees do not fear losing their jobs. Mr David Bower, Rover personnel director, also reports record numbers of employee efficiency suggestions - which last year saved £10m.

Unions, say consultants like Mr Cave, can provide a useful pressure on employers by "whistle-blowing" on everything from cutting training budgets to poor health and safety standards. Union lobbying, even on non-employment issues, for example on higher investment in research and development, can make a difference inside companies without requiring a formal apparatus of worker representation.

Unions also have a potential to act beyond the confines of individual companies. Unlike most companies, unions have links across whole industries which they can use strategically, for example, by trying to establish a better trade-off between pay and jobs across a sector.

Mr Gilbert of the CBI suggests that unions could have a role in creating a better balance between employee security and labour flexibility. That could be achieved, he believes, by encouraging employees to develop mobile skills, rather than clinging to particular jobs. "That means unions lobbying companies and the government for the highest possible level of training and retraining so that, if people do lose their jobs, it is not a disaster because they are readily employable elsewhere."

This is not an easy agenda for unions. But there are some workplace trends in their favour. For example, the increased emphasis on teamwork production methods has the potential to increase shop-floor clout in large manufacturing companies.

The challenge for Mr Monks over the next decade is to ensure that union influence does not retreat - US-style - into a few ghettos in manufacturing and the public sector. This week he must show he has the vision and imagination to prevent that fate.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

Fax 071 873 5938. Letters transmitted should be clearly typed and not hand written. Please set fax for finest resolution

Acid rain plan would not hit coal

From Gill Witter.

Sir, In Brownlee Maddox's article, "Dilution measures for acid rain" (August 31), she indicates that fears about the future of the coal industry lie behind the UK government's reluctance to commit itself to adequate reductions in sulphur emissions at last week's pan-European negotiations in Geneva.

It was for this reason that the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF UK) commissioned its own last-minute research. That research reveals that the future of the British coal industry and effective measures to reduce acid rain deposition are not mutually exclusive. It shows that, even with 80 per cent emission reduction (the level recommended by scientists), the UK could burn 37.5m tonnes of British coal without committing itself to flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) construction. With 12 GW of FGD (the original UK commitment), the UK could burn 46.2m tonnes of British coal (50 per cent higher than is likely to be used in 1993-94).

The report also shows that there could be up to 30 per cent more acid rain damage in some parts of Europe if the UK government insists on reductions of 70 per cent rather than 80 per cent in sulphur emissions. This discrepancy could spell disaster for sensitive European ecosystems. Under such circumstances Britain will surely have earned its reputation as "the dirty man of Europe" and encourage yet more "drippy" type comments.

Gill Witter, pollution officer, WWF UK, Panda House, Wayside Park, Cotteshall Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR

Merit in paying MPs by performance

From Mr David Manning.

Sir, You reported on September 1 that the royal household is to go on to merit pay ("Queen decrees pay by merit") and that Norman Lamont is to work two or three days a week in the City to supplement his MP's salary of £20,854 ("Lamont returns to City as Rothschild director").

In the interests of providing value for money to the electors/taxpayers and performance incentives for MPs, has the House of Commons considered introducing performance-related pay for itself? Pay could be positively linked to the hours an MP spends providing "exceptional service" in representing constituents, and inversely related to the time devoted to company directorships, journalism, writing memoirs and sundry other pursuits. Most MPs, presumably, would welcome such an arrangement.

David Manning, 2 Stapleford Close, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Trade as a means to green ends

From Ms Halina Ward.

Sir, I refer to your leader "Green thoughts and trade policy" (September 1). Trade can be of environmental benefit. But it does not make sense to use this fact to deny the wisdom of trade restrictions to achieve environmental ends.

The Montreal Protocol is a classic example of an international instrument which "entangles" trade and environment policy to achieve its objective. That objective is not to impose developed countries' domestic environmental policies on developing countries. It is to protect the ozone layer for the benefit of all countries.

The Multilateral Fund and the technology transfer provisions of the protocol encourage developing countries to accept its terms. Crucially, the protocol also discourages non-participation by means of restrictions on trade in ozone-depleting substances with non-parties.

Neither the integration of trade with environment policies nor the provision of compensation by way of funding mechanisms provides complete responses to disputes arising out of the existence of differing environmental standards. What is needed is a more holistic policy approach.

We also need to ask what kind of structures would be most effective in settling disputes arising out of different environmental standards. What should be the relationship between law and politics in those structures? Most controversially, what role should they accord to individuals as opposed to states? Halina Ward, solicitor, Mishcom de Reya, 21 Southampton Row, London WC1B 5HS

Trends indicate engineers not demoralised in UK

From Mr Denis Filer.

Sir, Your correspondents, Nicholas Cox and T Taylor (Letters, September 3) paint an overly pessimistic picture of the current situation of the UK's engineers.

The most recent salary survey carried out by The Engineering Council published in October last year, showed that the average earnings of chartered engineers had increased by 28.5 per cent over the previous three years to £31,768. Eight per cent of chartered engineers earn more than £50,000 a year.

The survey also showed that the profession's self-confidence is recovering from the dip it took in the middle of the last decade. Four out of every five chartered engineers would now commend the profession as a career to a young man and only a few percentage points less would do so for a young woman - figures that contradict any notion of a generally demoralised profession and confirm its enlightened attitude towards promoting itself as a career option for women.

As for innovation, there are several bodies operating in this area and it would not be to anyone's benefit to duplicate those efforts. However, at the younger end of the scale, where we have a free hand, the Engineering Council's Young Engineers for Britain competition this year attracted more than 700 entries, double last year's total. Many of the professional engineering institutions also have extensive programmes of seminars and conferences providing education in relevant technical and managerial issues.

No one can deny that the UK's manufacturing base has been hard hit in recent years. But there is still much constructive activity aimed at counteracting that trend on the part of the engineering profession and there are positive reasons why engineering is an attractive, stimulating and rewarding career option. Denis Filer, director general, The Engineering Council, 10 Maltravers Street, London WC2R 3FR

Danger of making excessive claims about value of brands

From Mr Nicholas Beale.

Sir, The method described in the article on the brand valuation of Intel (Technology, September 2) is fundamentally flawed. The returns a business earns above its cost of capital are not earned by brands alone but by the whole set of current intellectual assets of a busi-

ness: brands, skills, technologies, channels of distribution and supply, publication rights, systems and other information. In Intel's case there is an investment in technology that dwarfs the advertising and tangible asset investments. Excessive claims about brand valuation are damaging,

because they risk misleading investors and because they distract attention away from the real issue of understanding the investment that companies have made in their entire set of intellectual assets and the returns achieved by them. A sounder approach is described in the current issue of Profes-

sional Investor. UK investors and managers urgently need to understand these issues if we are to be competitive in the information economy of the 21st century. Nicholas Beale, Solicitor, 3 Berkeley Square, London W1X 8HG

CHINA & EASTERN INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED

Preliminary Announcement of Final Results for the Year Ended 31st July, 1993.

	1993 US\$	1992 US\$
NET ASSETS	53,817,874	49,569,350
REVENUE	2,166,789	1,858,654
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	814,214	1,395,050
PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	1,352,575	463,604
TAXATION	39	770
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	1,352,536	462,834
SPECIAL INTERIM DIVIDEND - PAID	-	204,000
FINAL DIVIDEND - PROPOSED	1,224,000	204,000
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR - RETAINED	128,536	54,834
EARNINGS PER SHARE	US\$0.066	US\$0.023
FINAL DIVIDEND PER SHARE	US\$0.06	US\$0.01
NET ASSET VALUE PER SHARE	US\$2.64	US\$2.43
OTHER TRANSFERS TO RESERVES		
Net profit on disposal of investments	US\$2,518,671	US\$406,164
Increase in valuation of investments	US\$1,601,317	US\$13,804,961

EARNINGS PER SHARE
The calculation of the earnings per share is based on profit for the year of US\$1,352,536 (1992: US\$462,834) and on 20,400,000 shares (1992: 19,952,429 shares) in issue.

TAXATION
The charge represents overseas withholding tax. During the year the majority of the Group's income was not assessable to Hong Kong Profits Tax as it was generated from offshore activities and capital transactions. The estimated assessable profit has been wholly absorbed by taxation losses brought forward and tax which would otherwise have been payable at 17.5% (1992: 17.5%) amounts to approximately US\$13,000 (1992: US\$13,000).

EXTRACT FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
China & Eastern's eighth year has seen the Company's net asset value increase to US\$53.82m (US\$2.64 per share) an 8.6% advance from the US\$49.57m (US\$2.43 per share) reported last year. The strong growth in China & Eastern's earnings has continued with the profit attributable to shareholders increasing by 192% to US\$1.35m from US\$0.46m in 1992. This growth, which arises from both an increase in revenue and a decrease in expenses, allows the Board to recommend a final dividend of US\$0.06 per share.

The most significant development during 1993 has been the listing of Chinese companies on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange through the issue of "H" shares. At the time of writing, four Chinese companies have been listed in Hong Kong raising US\$350m in the process. China & Eastern has taken advantage of this opportunity to increase its exposure to Chinese companies.

Notwithstanding the concerns over the potential overheating of the Chinese economy and the lack of any significant progress in the Sino-British discussions over democratic reform, market sentiment remains strong in Hong Kong. Given the level of liquidity available, in part due to the negative real interest rates in Hong Kong and the expansion of China's capital base, the Board looks to the future with confidence and believes that there will continue to be excellent investment opportunities for the Company through which the shareholders of China & Eastern can enjoy long term capital appreciation.

FINAL DIVIDEND
Your Board recommends the payment of a final dividend of US\$0.06 per share in respect of the 1993 financial year (1992: US\$0.01 per share).

REDEMPTION, PURCHASE OR CANCELLATION OF SHARES
There was no redemption, purchase or cancellation of shares by the Company or its subsidiaries during the year.

By order of the Board
M.G. Bond
Company Secretary
3rd September, 1993

The Annual Report and Accounts will be posted to shareholders at the end of September, 1993 and will be made available to the public at the Company's Registered Office, 8th Floor, Prince's Building, Hong Kong, its Registrar, Central Registration Hong Kong Limited, 19th Floor, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Hong Kong and its U.K. Transfer Agent, Barclays Registrars Ltd., Bourne House, 34 Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4TU. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 11.00 a.m. on 9th November, 1993 at 155 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3XU.

The Register will close at 4.00 p.m. on 25th October, 1993 and will re-open at 9.00 a.m. on 10th November, 1993. All transfers must be lodged with the Registrar no later than 4.00 p.m. on 25th October, 1993.

FINANCIAL TIMES

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Monday September 6 1993

Mr Murdoch and the law

MR RUPERT MURDOCH'S latest trail of deals and manoeuvres has reopened some old questions. Britain's Labour party wants him referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, having branded his simultaneous expansion of News Corporation's satellite TV interests and the price war he has launched in the UK broadsheet newspaper market "an affront to democracy".

However overexposed these comments may appear to those who have not, like Labour politicians, endured years of abuse from Mr Murdoch's titles, this renewed debate is of interest across the EC, where structures of media regulation are bending beneath the pressure of changing consumer tastes and technological advances.

In Britain, Mr Murdoch faces two complaints: that by cutting the price of The Times from 45p to 30p, News is aiming to kill off the rival Independent and that the expanded BSkyB (of which Mr Murdoch owns half) when added to his 35 per cent share of UK national newspaper sales, makes him too powerful. BSkyB, in which Pearson, owner of the Financial Times, holds a significant stake, last week launched a new 12-channel pay-TV service, and is forecast by some to overtake the terrestrial ITV commercial network in terms of revenues within the next three years.

Predatory pricing

Sir Bryan Carsberg, director-general of fair trading, says he is watching the newspaper price war, which Mr Murdoch has also ignited in the tabloid sector, with interest. His office's definition of predatory pricing – the deliberate acceptance of losses in the short term with the intention of eliminating competition so that enhanced profits may be achieved in the long term – looks *prima facie* as if it may indeed apply to the battle between the loss-making Times and the struggling Independent. The OFT has recently been active in pursuing its competitors accused of predatory actions, but in examining the newspaper industry, it will also note how The Independent worked to ensure the demise of the Sunday Correspondent or, to take an earlier example, the lengths to which Associated Newspapers went to kill in its infancy Mr Rob-

ert Maxwell's rival to the London Evening Standard. Predatory behaviour, resulting in short-term losses, does not have to include a price war.

The question of the concentration of media ownership and the related regulatory framework is more complex and important. What can be stated with confidence is that the law is outdated. This imposes detailed restrictions upon the ability of newspaper companies to own more than 20 per cent of terrestrial television and radio (even local radio) companies and yet sets no limit on the ownership of satellite TV.

Yawning gap

In the press, there is no general law on concentration of ownership, although the 1973 Fair Trading Act requires that any merger involving circulations of more than 500,000 should trigger an MMC investigation. In practice, this has not impeded Mr Murdoch, who has twice argued that the only alternative to his purchases (of first The Times and The Sunday Times, then of Today) would have been the closure of newspapers, thus enabling ministers to waive the rules.

The yawning gap in these arrangements, however, is the lack of guidance on what amounts to an unacceptable accumulation of power across the whole of the mass media. UK law recognises, in the case of the press, that these matters exceed in importance normal competition issues, since a democracy needs "accurate presentation of news and the free expression of opinion".

The time has thus come for the UK authorities to wrestle again with this principle in the new media world which Mr Murdoch has done so much to develop. It would be wrong to prejudice Mr Murdoch's case, since the barriers to entry in satellite television are still lower than in terrestrial broadcasting. Equally, however, it is unreasonable that terrestrial TV companies continue to face costly regulatory requirements, for example on the national origin of programmes, from which their satellite competitors are exempt. The most promising direction for change is to liberalise the over-regulated, rather than the converse, but a coherent approach is now a matter of urgency.

Blair House and the French PM

FRANCE AND Ireland have sometimes made common cause against a common Anglo-Saxon enemy, but Mr Peter Sutherland, director-general of Gatt, who visits Paris this week, is not that kind of Irishman. Some of his French hosts, indeed, will see him as little better than an Anglo-Saxon messenger boy, although the message he brings – that last year's Blair House agreement between the EC and the US on agricultural trade cannot and must not be reopened – has the support of the vast majority of the 106 countries taking part in the Uruguay Round negotiations.

His task of getting this message through to the French has been made more difficult by the German chancellor who, after talks with the French prime minister the week before last, declared publicly that Germany too had "problems" with the Blair House agreement, and implied that he expected a new or supplementary agreement to be negotiated. Several of his ministers and spokesmen hastened to explain that this was not what he had really meant, and Mr Kohl himself allayed Mr Sutherland's anxieties on the point last week. But clearly he did point last week. At least some sympathy for the French position. Bilateral Franco-German talks on the subject have now started, although the Germans insist that their object is to find a solution which leaves Blair House intact.

Hard to accept

The trouble with this approach is that no solution can both modify the agreement (as the French insist it must) and not modify it. But politics obeys different laws from logic. Nearly a year of intensive *surrendere* (mutual outbidding) by French politicians in denunciation of the agreement has left them with a real, if unnecessary, problem. Even a prime minister of Mr Edouard Balladur's unprecedented popularity would find it very hard now, after all that has been said, simply to accept the agreement without any kind of quid pro quo.

What then can be done to make this unwelcome pill easier for the French body politic to swallow? As far as agriculture is concerned it would be unrealistic to expect any further concessions from the

US. At most the EC might go through the motions of demanding a right to take some kind of protective or compensatory action in the event of very large and sudden movements in prices, or in currency parities. But any tangible satisfaction will have to come from within the EC itself, and take forms which do not infringe the agreement.

Commercial policy

The French government might reasonably ask its partners for an undertaking that they will resist any US demand for guarantees that food imports will supply a specific share of the EC market. Less reasonably, but on past form not unrealistically, it may expect a direct transfer of financial resources, in other words a bribe. Almost certainly it will be encouraged to bribe French farmers from its own national resources, provided it does so in ways that neither stimulate increased production nor subsidise lower prices.

As far as possible, however, France's partners should seek to shift discussion away from agriculture on to the broader questions of commercial policy which France has raised. The demand for the EC to equip itself with more credible powers to retaliate against arbitrary protectionist measures taken by the US or other powers is not unreasonable, so long as those powers are not abused to placate producer lobbies within the EC, and the demand that the EC press for an effective international body, to make sure that new trading rules are actually observed, is one that all sincere free traders should support.

In raising such questions France is behaving more like the great industrial power it actually is, and less like the carefully fenced rural reserve which is how it sometimes sees itself. In the last resort, the job of breaking the French obsession with subsidised agriculture is one for France's own leaders. Behind a smokescreen of demagoguery, they have in fact moved a long way in that direction. In the present conjuncture they might be able to go further if at the same time they relaxed their monetary policy, giving industry a better chance to absorb the labour which, willy-nilly, will continue to leave the land.

The vice-president of Russia, a long-time opponent of the president with whom he was elected a little over two years ago, is suspended from his duties by the president because he is charged with corruption on a massive scale. His allies in parliament declare the suspension invalid and refer it to the constitutional court.

Though the president's men protest that this is merely a head of state protecting Russia's reputation against allegations of wrongdoing in high places, the move is widely seen as the opening of the "September offensive" Mr Boris Yeltsin promised against his many foes. The offensive has as its aim the breaking of the Gordian knot of political tensions and enmities now so large and tight that a chainsaw, not a sword, is required.

Russians and western observers are both tired of Mr Yeltsin's promised "decisive" movements against his opponents. He has so far lacked the will to smash through the existing constitution to clear the space for a new one: if this is the long-promised offensive, say Moscow political circles, so be it, but no smart money is on it.

No wonder he hesitates: the Russian president has a queue of immense problems that awaits his attention. Tackling any one of them in a decisive way would shatter the unstable stasis which is Russian politics at present.

He has, in the first place, an incoherent and internally warring government: not only are the extremes within it accusing each other of corruption, but so are nominal allies – Mr Vladimir Shumeiko, first deputy prime minister suspended from office at the same time as Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, had earlier accused Mr Sergei Glaziev, the trade minister and a moderate reformist, of corrupt practices.

Further, it is riven on economic policy: Mr Oleg Lobov, another first deputy premier appointed by Mr Yeltsin from the ranks of his old friends, is pushing hard for the doubling of state investments, even as Mr Boris Fyodorov, the finance minister, struggles to contain the budget deficit within a limit of 10 per cent of gross national product. The government's grip on the country's regions and republics is weak: the shaping of transparent, equally applied laws and taxes is rendered impossible because those at the top levels of power in Moscow are competing for allies in the regions and cities with promises and deals.

Private business, in some areas, booms – but often it is the boom of machine guns, as contract killers remove rivals or non-payers of protection money. Around 10 bankers have been murdered in the past few months, together with a handful of

Rock solid against Yeltsin's reforms

John Lloyd examines the ongoing battle for political power that is stifling Russia's economic development

foreign businessmen. These assassinations put an effective wall around the private sector, advertising it as a place only for the greedy, the corrupt and the well guarded.

To be sure, the profit motive appears to be ingrained: and on the evidence of former prime minister Mr Yegor Gaidar's Association of Private and Privatising Businesses, which held a conference last week, many state managers are becoming interested in profit, stable prices and investment.

To be sure, too, businesses are being created and some infrastructure investments are being made in some locations, such as St Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Rostov. But the all-consuming struggle for power, like a great war, drains energy and resources from all over the country.

The government survives, in part, by placating the political and economic actors. Mr Vladimir Mau, a former government adviser, mentions the example of Ulyanovsk region receiving a special dispensation to keep 50 per cent of the value-added tax it collects, rather than the stipulated 20 per cent. Word is spreading among other regional leaders, and they are lobbying for the same treatment. Parliament is discussing a law to give the regions discretionary powers on what taxes to remit to the centre – precisely the issue seized on by the *putschists* in August 1991 as a reason for their attempt to stop the disintegration of the then Soviet Union.

A weak, split government cannot hope to fulfil the conditions laid down by the Group of Seven leading industrial nations, and administered by the International Monetary Fund, for the payment of assistance. At the end of August, Mr John O'Ding-Smee, the IMF's chief interlocutor with the Russian government, told it that unless progress was made on curbing the budget deficit, lowering inflation (now said, by Mr Shumeiko, to be heading for 30 per cent a month once more) and delivering on a reasonable reform programme, the second half of the \$3bn special fund would not be paid this autumn.

This quiet indication is an admission of failure by both Russia and the G7. It was only in the spring that a new headline figure, of \$44bn,



was unveiled as the western package to save Russia. In July the figure was confirmed by the G7 leaders in Tokyo.

Now, say western diplomats and international economists, the G7 is studying the figures – especially the amount of western funds ending up in Swiss bank accounts – and toning down the rhetoric. The political consequences of this tacit suspension of support for the reform strategy threatens the further existence of the tiny band of radical reformers within the cabinet itself.

This may mean that the G7 – most of whose members were sceptical about the US-led \$44bn package in any case – has given up its faith that rapid reform is possible. Diplomatic conversations refer increasingly to the lack of a real consensus for change, and are replete with comparisons with those Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Argentina, which managed to produce solid bases for radical action only after a sufficiently large section of the political class had become convinced there was no alternative, and had in turn produced a government committed to such a policy.

In Russia, the initial Gaidar-led

team, whose members were hot-eyed for reform, has been whittled down to a few weary individuals doggedly fighting for what they can win and ceding what they cannot. All of the economic indicators, save the stability of the rouble, which has remained at just under 1,000 to the dollar for nearly two months, are turning against them. General Winter, that scourge of attacks from the west, again approaches.

Mr Yeltsin, the inheritor of all the centralist, authoritarian instincts of Russian political and civil societies, remains the key to action. He has a strategy of courts: to share state power not with the parliament but with a Federation Council composed of regional and republican leaders who will support his plans for new parliamentary elections and a new constitution. It cannot be arrived at constitutionally and it lacks many of the attributes of formal (and informal) democracy. But it may be an effective, if blunt, instrument for breaking through to conditions within which democracy could be constructed.

He has also, over this past weekend, bolstered his position with that substantial part of the political class which sees him as too complacent and weak, by appearing to force Ukraine's leadership to sell its half of the divided Black Sea fleet and send back the nuclear warheads – "trainian territory to Russia. This takes the wind out of the sails of the nationalist opposition, and increases the chances that at least the three Slav states of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus – with most of the Central Asian countries and possibly others among the former Soviet republics – will agree later this month to huddle together under Russian economic, security and political hegemony. This partial reconstitution of the union would increase Mr Yeltsin's standing – though it would further add to Russia's enormous economic burdens.

But even if this were to be achieved, the Russian president must still surmount major problems of decisiveness, stamina and belief. He must muster large amounts of the first two to take on a well-trenched, many-tentacled opposition in the middle of a prolonged slump, and push a programme which means further sacrifices. For that, he must believe in the ultimate rightness of a radical programme. But what Mr Yeltsin believes is a real puzzle: time and again, he makes decisions based on what appears to be a genuinely liberal world view; time and again, his actions, either of commission or omission, contradict such a view. Thus, when once more he faces a decisive choice, we cannot know how – or if – he will finally make it.

Bronwen Maddox argues that some environmentalists' claims should be treated with caution

Greens' bogus science

Public mistrust of science was lamented once again by the British Association for the Advancement of Science at its jamboree last week in Keels, Staffordshire. Should the association then welcome the way that environmentalists are popularising science?

Enrolment on "environmental science" courses is growing, warnings about the ozone layer abound in supermarket advertisements, and seven-year-olds tyrannise their parents about recycling kitchen rubbish.

For their part, the "green" pressure groups are increasingly couching their campaigns in scientific language. Their traditional "rubber suit" brigades, who made their reputations through direct action such as plugging the oil pipes of chemical companies, have been joined by squads of PhD holders. The better-funded groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace now issue sheafs of closely analysed reports on the impact of toxic chemicals or radiation.

That research has helped the credibility of the groups' campaigns. But many of the claims made by environmentalists in the name of science should be treated

with caution. The arguments put forward often lack intellectual rigour, and they indulge the pressure groups' worst vice: the reluctance to rank some environmental threats as more significant than others.

One of these misleading arguments is the suggestion that it is impossible to prove that any substance is "harmless". Just because no ill-effects have been spotted, say some environmentalists, does not mean there are none: they may have been overlooked, or may not emerge for decades.

This uncertainty, the argument runs, stems from the way that scientific knowledge is built up. Knowledge constantly evolves, as hypotheses are tested against evidence and retained, modified or rejected. Therefore, because accepted theories may be amended in the future, no scientific "proof" of the safety of a particular substance can be certain.

As a result, they say, a new "green" approach to science is needed. In an article entitled "How science fails the environment" in

the New Scientist magazine in June, Ms Sue Mayer, director of science at Greenpeace UK, and Mr Brian Wynne of the University of Lancaster said that "greener science" would force the polluter to prove a chemical was safe, not make the environmentalist prove it was harmful. They demanded that science embrace the "precautionary principle" that "the environment must not be left to show harm before action is taken".

This position is nonsense. Science is inescapably an empirical exercise, but that does not mean that scientific knowledge is impossible. Some theories have persistently shown themselves effective at explaining why things happen.

Mayer's and Wynne's proposals do not "shift the burden of proof" to the polluter – they simply destroy any notion of proof.

The unfortunate consequences of this approach are considerable. It allows anything to be described as a pollutant, even if damage has not been observed. It also makes it impossible to call one pollutant less dangerous than another – what about the as-yet-unknown long-term effects? For this reason, many leading environmental groups were reluctant to acknowledge that the Shetlands oil spill in January might be less damaging than the Alaskan one in 1989, even though storms dispersed the Shetland slick quickly.

The approach can also cause "legal mayhem", in the words of one leading City solicitor. The precautionary principle is incorporated in a treaty on sea pollution signed by North Atlantic governments and in parts of UK food law. But the "green science" approach makes it hard for governments and companies to demonstrate that they have taken "enough" care.

There is a legitimate place for the precautionary principle – as part of policymaking. The principle, which was endorsed by last year's Rio Earth Summit and is part of UK policy, recognises that scientific proof often takes time to establish.

For example, it is not yet clear whether recent changes in the earth's temperature should be attributed to emission of "greenhouse gases", and scientists may take several decades to work out whether more warming is likely. Governments, however, have judged that it is worth acting now because the effect of warming on climate and agriculture would be unwelcome. That decision stems from political judgement about the risk which society will tolerate – it is separate from the science of establishing whether theories are correct.

The green groups are right to point out that research into the environmental impact of chemicals could often be more thorough. But the approach that "you never know what the long-term effects might be" gives undue weight to the pessimists. It is certainly not scientific, and it does little to help people distinguish needless worries from real threats.

Quayle hunts the clients

Good to hear that Dan Quayle is earning a crust, most recently as chairman of FX Strategic Advisers, a joint venture the former US vice-president has set up with FX Concepts, itself a New York-based consultancy and money management outfit that specialises in foreign exchange.

Karl Jackson, Quayle's old national security adviser who is also managing director of FX Concepts, says the idea of the offshoot is to extend the group's clientele into Asia.

"It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out that where the economic growth is going to be over the next decade, He [Quayle] is very interested in that part of the world."

Jackson, an Asian specialist and a professor at Berkeley before he came to Washington to join the Bush administration, soon "latched on to Quayle as someone to lead the charge regarding policies in that part of the world".

More recently, he says with refreshing honesty, it has been Quayle that has done the latching on to him.

In other words, the jokes don't flow quite as they do at home? "There is a veneer of politeness in their culture."

Fireman's fight

Guinness Mahon merchant banker Bruce Fireman's experiences with the broadcast media have hitherto tended to be bathed in tears rather than champagne.

His first flop was at university, when he launched a weekly, New Cambridge, to take on the well-known Varsity. But it folded, with a £700 loss, as the 49-year-old Fireman now recalls.

In 1980 he was involved in a bid for the Southern ITV franchise and lost – although he did make five grand by selling his consortium's registered name of TVS to the winner.

During the 1991 ITV franchise round, he managed to push his next consortium, White Rose Television, over the programme quality threshold, only to be outbid by Yorkshire.

OBSERVER



'Chef recommends the '87'

commercial radio franchises. "I've got it right at last," purrs the future deputy chairman of LNR.

Last waltz

When Paul Keating drops by Balmoral in the middle of this month, his purpose is to let Queen Elizabeth know, doubtless in his ever-diplomatic way, that his country wishes to, er, dispense with her services.

Should there be a lapse in the conversation, Her Majesty might, however, care to point out to the Australian prime minister just how difficult it would be to cast off all ties with the old country.

When the Ozies revert to their unofficial national anthem – Waltzing Matilda – they will still be singing to the music of an 18th-century army recruitment song, which originated in Rochester, Kent.

Devised for the Duke of Marlborough's campaigns in the war of the Spanish succession, its opening words roll along to the same old tune: "And come, be a soldier with Marlborough and me..."

Taken down under by the convicts, it was left to "Banjo" Paterson to swap the lyrics. Or so says Jonathan Marcus, the BBC World Service's defence correspondent, who has just started a 10-part history of warfare, From Hoplite to Harrier.

Shell-like

A new generation of advertisers is going to work on an egg. Many years on from the little lion, ink-jet technology now enables packages to print the "best before" date on the eggs themselves; hence, following government recommendations that all eggs be so labelled, the advertising industry is scrambling to use this domestic boarding.

And once European Community agricultural ministers have discussed egg-labelling at their meeting in Brussels later this month, a call for mandatory dating across the continent could open

a huge market. Domestic Packaging Sciences, which has pioneered the process in the UK, says common standards will have to be adopted by packaging companies to make advertising worthwhile.

But it predicts that cooks will soon be cracking eggs-verts to make their *chefs d'oeuvres*.

Sole of discretion

While most of Asil Nadir's personal effects went under the hammer at Christie's last month, a rather less public tender of his wardrobe has also been in progress, arranged by auctioneers Edward Symons & Partners.

Symons from the catalogue, it would appear that Nadir's waistline was almost as volatile as the price of Polly Peck shares, with suits ranging from 34 to 38-inch waist to be disposed of.

More intriguing, however, is the collection of shoes, mostly size 10, but one pair size 9 and one size 12.

Would that Hush Puppies could speak.

Boom, boom

As Renault and Volvo get hitched, a reader ponders a suitable name for the combine. Revolutaut is already doing the rounds, but how about VRUM, or Volvo/Renault Union Motors?

OR

Trade as a means to green ends

brands

Recent rally in London equity market under threat US investors turning from UK to continental Europe

By Terry Byland in London and Patrick Harverson in New York

US INVESTORS who helped drive the London stock market to new peaks in the last days of August are turning their attention to other European bourses, threatening to undermine the UK equity market's recent rally.

Concern over US investment diverting to other European markets, particularly France, Spain and Italy, may cast a shadow over the UK market this week after contributing to a 1.4 per cent fall last week.

Some US funds have doubled their stake in investment in European equities since the widening of ERM currency bands at the beginning of August.

The ensuing falls in French and German interest rates have reduced the relative advantages of UK equities, according to London and New York analysts with leading US investment banks.

US securities analysts and fund

managers in New York, Boston and London said they are now attracted to continental European markets after their recent buying spree in London.

Mr Marcus Grub, of Salomon Brothers International in London, said he favoured France, Spain, Italy and Germany over the UK. Goldman Sachs International, is advising US investors to be "overweight Europe", but puts the focus on France and Spain rather than the UK.

US based analysts are cooling on UK stocks. Mr Kevin McCarey, who runs a \$150m pension fund that invests in European equities for the Boston-based Fidelity group, says he has been shifting some money out of the UK recently.

Mr McCarey is hoping to find bargains in continental Europe, especially Italy, Spain and Germany. He explained: "Interest rates are the highest in Spain and Italy; therefore they have the most room to come down."

Mr Heydon Traub, a fund manager with State Street Global Advisers in Boston who runs a \$2bn global equity fund that is 50 per cent invested in Europe, and 10 per cent in the UK, has not taken any money out of the London market recently because the fund has been underweight in UK stocks for a long time.

Mr Traub said: "The UK went through some tough economic times over the last couple of years, and the market really never went down much to reflect that, so from our point of view it has been overvalued for a year or two. Given that, we don't expect it to be a strong performer."

Mr Traub said that in spite of strong earnings this year UK shares would still not be as attractive as other European stocks. "We expect UK earnings growth to be really strong, but the price you have to pay for that is pretty high now. You don't have to pay up as much in other markets like France."

Boost for AT&T in fight for UK market

By Andrew Adonis

OFTEL, the UK telecommunications regulator, has given the strongest signal yet that American Telephone & Telegraph will be allowed to compete with British Telecommunications in the £15bn (£23bn) a year UK telecoms market.

Ofel has invited AT&T to a seminar next month called to discuss the terms on which competitors should be allowed access to BT's network. The regulator said AT&T had been invited "purely for the wealth of its experience in the US" on the way rival telephone companies reimburse one another for using their networks.

However, the invitation will be seen as a boost for AT&T in its campaign to win government approval to compete in the UK. The Department of Trade and Industry is considering an application from AT&T for a public operator licence.

The DTI set a precedent for AT&T's entry by recently granting draft licences to three foreign groups to compete with BT, the dominant British telecoms group. BT itself has applied to the US Federal Communications Commission for a licence to allow it to buy and sell services in the US.

The costs of installing a new telecommunications network are huge. So to compete effectively with BT, rival operators require access to its national telephone network to carry their services. The Ofel seminar will examine the terms on which BT should allow rivals access.

AT&T is the only operator without a UK licence to be invited to the Ofel seminar, at which BT will give further details of its proposal to publish tariffs to competitors for connection to its network.

Several regional US operators - all making substantial investments in the UK's growing cable telephone industry - have made representations on BT's outline proposal. They will have to make do with a few of the five places at the seminar allocated to the Cable Television Association.

In its submission to Ofel, AT&T called for BT to be obliged not only to publish standard connection tariffs, but also to disclose the relevant costs behind them.

Ofel's draft proposals favoured "accounting separation" between BT's retail and network businesses. Most of the operators favour more specific regulation of bottlenecks to competitive entry, particularly terms of access to the local telephone network.

THE LEX COLUMN

BNP's private hopes

Since BNP will be the first in the looming wave of French privatisations, it stands to reason that investors will be offered an attractive deal. Frantic preparation is now under way on the offering, which looks likely to be targeted heavily towards French retail investors. Keeping international buyers short would be one way of whipping up appeal. As with Spain's Argenta sale earlier this year, their enthusiasm could spill over into the domestic market, creating a virtuous circle of demand.

Blow away the froth, though, and a more complex question arises. Having virtually doubled over the past year, BNP's investment certificates are discounting a substantial earnings recovery. The market assumed that, by announcing a 42 per cent increase in first-half bad debt provisions, Mr Michel Pébereau, BNP's new chairman, was clearing the decks for such a recovery. Provisions could again be high in the second half, though, given BNP's heavy exposure to the small business sector which is taking the brunt of the current downturn.

With the authorities still reluctant to cut interest rates, it could be 1995 before BNP delivers a solid earnings recovery. Admittedly, it may be striking when it comes, simply because peak provisions will have been so high. Even if Mr Pébereau only manages a modest clampdown on costs, there could also be significant growth in operating income.

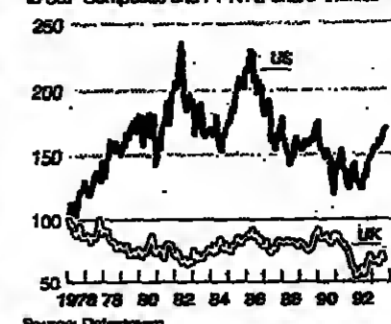
The danger is that the shine could be taken off by the plan for BNP to raise additional capital to purchase a further 10 per cent of the UAP insurance company. Such a move fits with official policy of giving privatised companies an interlocking network of stable shareholders, but it makes little commercial sense when BNP already has its own life insurance operation. Above all, it risks being dilutive: UAP's longer term recovery prospects are considerably less exciting than those of BNP itself.

Insurance

It takes a leap of faith to believe that UK insurers can maintain the level of insurance profits evident from their interim results. Since investment returns are likely to be lower than in the past, and the memory of recent underwriting disasters are still fresh, good intentions abound. But even two consecutive years of underwriting profits would be an achievement not managed in the 1980s. With balance

Insurance Sector

US and UK composite insurance sectors relative to S&P Composite and FT-A All-Share indices



Source: Datastream

sheets restored to health by rising equity markets and rights issues, underwriting discipline will be harder to maintain.

What can not be achieved by management might eventually be achieved by regulation. Prudential guidelines in the US discourage companies from backing insurance liabilities with risk assets such as equities and property. There is sense in the argument: an October storm combined with a stock market crash last year would have left more than one UK insurer exposed in the US. That the devaluation of sterling has helped recapitalise the sector is of little comfort.

Similar regulations at home would mean profound change. Sun Alliance, for example, invests around 15 per cent of reserves against future claims in equities - a sum equivalent to around twice shareholders' funds. Robbed of that gearing to equities, insurance profits would assume greater importance. In theory, there is no reason why that should matter, but the evidence is to the contrary. UK insurers have lagged the stock market over the last 20 years, while their US counterparts have outperformed.

UK utilities

The kerfuffle over whether Ofgas was or was not trying to curb British Gas's international expansion must have sent a shiver through the company's boardroom. Despite hopes that a new chairman and director general might strike up a better working relationship, it has raised the spectre that tensions between the two sides may remain. Such conflict in the gas industry contrasts with other utilities and raises concerns about consistent regulation. Companies often complain that regulators' decisions are not explained

and vary between industries. Under the circumstances, calls for a "super-regulator" to oversee the system are understandable. Yet that would add to bureaucracy and increase the risk of industry regulators being undermined by companies appealing over their heads. More palatable is the idea that both regulator and company should be required to disclose more information. The fairness of each case could then be more easily determined. True, the company might be more likely to ask judicial review of decisions, but to do so it would have to publicly disclose its case - including presumably any commercially sensitive information.

Another way to alleviate tension might be a kind of "small claims court" to resolve local disputes at a level below that of a full Monopolies and Mergers Commission enquiry. The Office of Fair Trading might act as honest broker and prevent the kind of nuclear warfare which broke out between British Gas and Sir James McKinnon.

Cadbury Schweppes

Perhaps Cadbury will be have more to say about Dr Pepper/Seven-Up's poison pill when it delivers its interim results this week. Meanwhile the market is left with the impression that Dr Pepper has dealt it a serious blow. Cadbury's £150m purchase of a further 20 per cent of Dr Pepper last month only made sense with the prospect of close operating collaboration between the two companies. If they are at loggerheads over ownership, the chances of that seem remote.

Yet the commercial advantages of getting together would be considerable for both. Cadbury could strengthen its distribution in the US and Dr Pepper would gain access to overseas bottlers who were not involved with either Pepsi or Coke. Dr Pepper's latest outburst may simply reflect its management's desire to avoid ceding control, at least on the cheap. If so, an eventual compromise seems likely.

The elegant solution would be for Cadbury to sell its US carbonates business to Dr Pepper in exchange for shares and a seat on the board. That would give it a large stake, which it could equity account, in a business with 15 per cent of the US soft drinks market, while sparing the need for a rights issue to fund a full hostile bid. The drawback is that such a half measure could undermine Cadbury's lack of critical mass in the world market.

EC to probe antitrust allegations

Continued from Page 1

soft has deliberately attempted to limit competition in the market for personal computer operating systems - a charge that Congress has the basic functions of a PC. Microsoft, whose DOS operating system is used on about 90 per cent of all PCs, offers PC manufacturers discounts if they agree to pay an operating system licence fee for all of the computers of a particular model sold.

Novell claims that "per-processor licensing" arrangement excludes competition from its alternative DR-DOS program.

Novell is also understood to charge Microsoft with illegal "tying" of sales of one product to another. Novell alleges that Microsoft introduced "intentional incompatibilities" in Windows, the popular PC graphical user interface program, to give PC users the impression Windows would not work properly with competitors' systems.

Mr Bill Gates, Microsoft chairman, has previously denied both of these charges, which were investigated by the FTC. He has also accused Novell of "heavily promoting these issues in an attempt to force Microsoft to raise its DOS prices in order to enable Novell to more effectively compete".

Romanians seek a short cut to riches

By Virginia Marsh in Bucharest

MORE THAN 2m Romanians - 10 per cent of the population - have sunk cash into a pyramid money multiplying scheme at the Transylvanian town of Cluj.

The scheme is known as Caritas, although it has no connection with the international charity of the same name. It takes deposits, with a promise to pay back eight times the amount in three months.

Tales of "Caritas millionaires" have spread around Romania, encouraging thousands of people to descend on Cluj, in Romania's western province, in the hope of cashing in and hedging against raging inflation.

While most Romanians grapple with soaring prices, declining living standards and meagre pay, the cash-rich people of Cluj cannot spend their money quickly enough.

Investors deposit a minimum of Lei20,000 (£23), nearly a third of the average monthly wage. Three months later, Caritas, which has in the meantime collected from new depositors, pays out eight times the original investment, less a commission. Many people are leaving their money in the scheme in the hope of bigger gains to come.

Headscarved peasant women,

many clutching bags full of money, wait in the four-day queue outside the sports hall where Caritas is based, alongside groups of gypsies and young men from Transylvania's countryside, some clutching bundles of notes. Even the Church is involved: nuns and priests ply the exits with collection boxes.

All hope to benefit from Caritas, even though most say they know it will eventually collapse.

"Caritas is our only hope of surviving the winter," says a woman who had travelled 300km with her elderly father to deposit their monthly salary and pension in the scheme. "We can't keep up with the price rises. Inflation is 260 per cent a year, but we only get 50 per cent interest in the savings bank."

The riches Caritas has brought to many in Transylvania have made its founder, Mr Ioan Stoica, a former bookkeeper, a national hero.

Diplomats say the scheme looks like a classic money-laundering scam but the Romanian central government, which since July has levied on Caritas a new 18 per cent value-added tax, has done little to discourage it.

Some local officials, however, are highly critical of it and fear the consequences when the inevitable collapse comes.

Israel confident on peace deal despite haggling

Continued from Page 1

a simultaneous deal on recognition. Mr Peres said the agreements are not dependent on each other. The Palestinians, however,

believe that recognition is a vital prize and should be accorded before the final signing of the outline agreement in Washington, partly to help the PLO muster broader support for the deal

itself among its diverse Arab and Palestinian opponents.

Meanwhile, in Israel, at least 40,000 people chanted their backing for the government in a rally organised by the Peace Now

movement in Tel Aviv on Saturday.

Israeli settlers and other right-wingers hostile to the deal plan to respond tomorrow with a mass demonstration in Jerusalem.

FT WORLD WEATHER

Europe today

Former hurricane Emily which has become an ordinary depression is moving over the Atlantic towards Ireland as a high pressure area that has been over the British Isles for weeks shifts toward the east. As a result, clouds and afternoon showers will arrive in western coastal areas, but sunny periods will continue in most of north-western Europe. Southerly winds will increase to near gale force in Ireland, Brittany and north-western Spain in the evening. Low pressure over the Pyrenees will cause thundery showers to develop in northern Spain and south-western France. Elsewhere around the Mediterranean it will be sunny. Meanwhile, eastern Europe will continue to have thundery showers.

Five-day forecast

The remnants of Emily will move over the British Isles while weakening. It will be rainy and windy in north-western Europe, but temperatures will increase. More thundery showers will develop in Spain, southern France and later over the Alps. High pressure over Greece and southern Italy will keep conditions settled and sunny in the eastern Mediterranean countries. High pressure will bring improving conditions in eastern Europe later in the week.

TODAY'S TEMPERATURES

Abu Dhabi	sun 30	Beirut	cloudy 17	Cardiff	fair 16	Frankfurt	fair 18	Geneva	sun 22	Malta	sun 29	Rio	cloudy 20
Accra	sun 33	Bermuda	showers 17	Chicago	showers 18	Glasgow	cloudy 17	Manchester	cloudy 17	Moscow	sun 27	Riyadh	sun 41
Algiers	sun 33	Bogota	cloudy 18	Dallas	fair 34	Hamburg	cloudy 17	Marseille	cloudy 17	Munich	sun 27	Rome	sun 28
Amsterdam	sun 27	Brussels	cloudy 18	Dubai	sun 34	Heidelberg	cloudy 17	Medan	sun 31	Nairobi	sun 27	S. Francisco	sun 21
Athens	sun 27	Buenos Aires	sun 27	Hong Kong	cloudy 28	London	cloudy 17	Montreal	sun 21	San Jose	sun 27	Singapore	sun 30
B. Aires	sun 27	Cape Town	sun 27	Kuala Lumpur	sun 34	Madrid	sun 27	Paris	sun 27	Seoul	sun 27	Stockholm	sun 22
Bangkok	sun 31	Cebu	sun 31	Manila	sun 31	Osaka	sun 27	Shanghai	sun 27	Sydney	sun 27	Taipei	sun 27
Barcelona	sun 27	Colombo	sun 27	Perth	sun 27	Tokyo	sun 27	Toronto	sun 27	Tungurahua	sun 27	Ulaanbaatar	sun 27
Beijing	sun 30	Coral Gables	sun 27	Reykjavik	sun 27	Zurich	sun 27	Warsaw	sun 27	Yokohama	sun 27		

Forecasts by Meteo Consult of the Netherlands

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1993 INTERIM RESULTS

Operating profits up 70%. Promising outlook.

	1993	1992	1992
	Half Year	Half Year	Full Year
Operating profit	£51.5m	£30.3m	£155.6m
Profits before taxation	£46.3m	£34.6m	£150.8m
Earnings per share	6.2p	4.4p	19.3p
Earnings per share - adjusted	5.6p	3.0p	18.4p
Dividends per share	5.375p	5.375p	12.0p

The results for the year 1992 are an abridged version of the full accounts which received an unqualified report by the auditors and have been filed with the Registrar of Companies. The half year figures are unaudited.



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INSIDE Stockholm blesses car group marriage

Sweden's centre-right government has given its blessing to the full merger, expected to be announced early this week, of Volvo, the country's premier manufacturing company, with Renault, of France. "Volvo is very important to the Swedish economy, but this is a market-oriented government," said one official. Page 16

AMD under Intel shadow

The latest microprocessor chips from Advanced Micro Devices will incorporate Intel technology at the centre of a legal battle between the two Silicon Valley chip makers. AMD's sales of Intel microprocessor clones have boosted earnings, but legal disputes have cast doubt over the future. Page 16

NatWest's capital twist

National Westminster's sensitivity about its low capital ratio has caused a disagreement with the Bank of England. NatWest was keen to avoid putting up capital backing for some of its underwritten credit facilities, but it was told by the Bank that such facilities could not be zero-weighted for the capital ratio calculation. Page 14

Floating to avoid cramp

It took Graham Wilson two attempts to buy out Parkdene Leisure, which operates caravan and chalet holiday parks in the UK. But now the buy-out structure is cramping growth and Mr Wilson's escape route is a flotation, planned for next month. Page 14

Through the 6% barrier

THE US bond market reached a historic landmark on Friday when the yield on the benchmark 30-year Treasury note fell below 6 per cent for the first time in 16 years. But Wall Street Cassandra's are beginning to ask how soon the remarkable rally will go into reverse. Page 18

Prospective p/e ratio

The latest prospective p/e ratio for the "500" index for calendar 1993 is 15.0, according to IBS, the consensus estimates service (last week 15.6). This compares with an IBS estimated p/e for the "500" of 21 (20.6) for calendar 1992. The official FT calculation of the historic p/e, based on the latest reported earnings, is 20.27 (20.48).

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Sale of gold fixers shakes up old club

By Kenneth Gooding,
Mining Correspondent

WHEN two out of five members of an exclusive club want to quit, questions are inevitable. That is what is happening at the London Gold Fixing whose five members fix the gold price twice daily. Deutsche Bank, Germany's biggest bank, said on Friday that it hoped to buy Sharps Pixley, a bullion house that is one of the five gold fixers. A month ago, Republic National Bank of New

York, part of the international group controlled by Mr Edmond Safra, the Swiss-based Lebanese banker, revealed it planned to buy Mase Westpac, another member of the fixers' club. It was widely known that Sharps, owned by the Kleinwort Benson merchant banking group, was for sale. Similarly, London dealers were concerned about Mase Westpac, owned by Westpac, Australia's biggest bank which has been restructuring. There is relief that powerful new

owners are ready to stand behind these long-established businesses. London boasts that it does more physical gold business than any other financial centre. But that business has slowed to a trickle and, without activity, bullion houses have little chance of making profits. The recent gold price surge was mainly based on options-related activity. Higher prices depressed demand for physical gold in key areas such as the Middle and Far East.

The rally took gold from a seven-year low of \$327 a troy ounce in January to \$406.70 on August 2, its highest since the Gulf war in 1991. Another sell-off last week sent the price back to \$384.25 in London on Friday. There are fears that disillusioned New York investors will drive gold down further after today's Labour Day holiday. Such movements matter little to Deutsche Bank. It claims to be one of the three largest traders in South African gold bullion, to

have 50 per cent of Germany's gold trading business and an important position in the Australian gold market. If it acquires Sharps, it will add market-making in London where it now only trades precious metals. Also, for what promises to be a relatively small price, Sharps will give Deutsche a ring-dealing membership of the London Metals Exchange, where base metals prices are fixed, and membership of the New York Commodity Exchange.

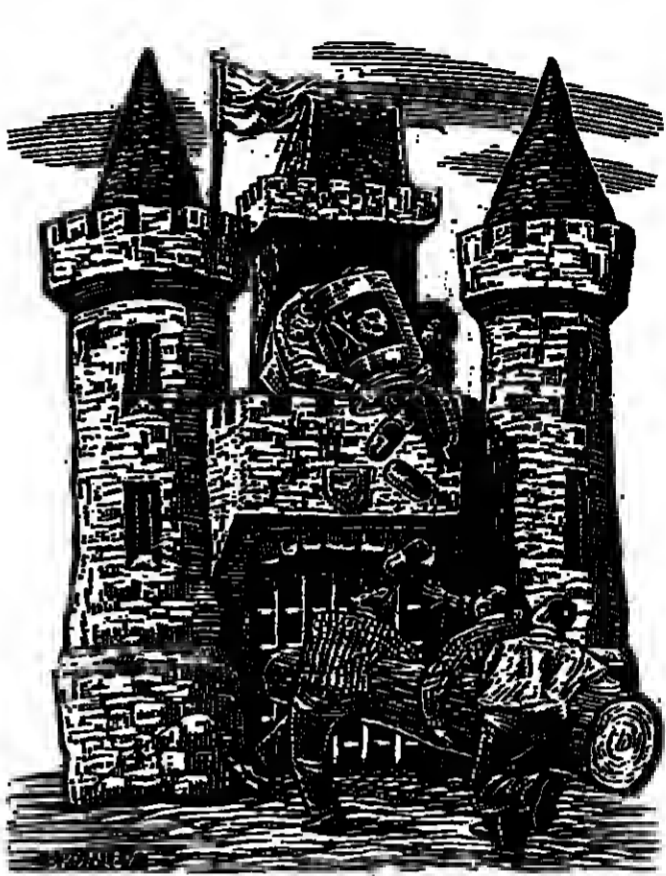
Richard Waters examines shareholder suspicion of anti-takeover devices

It could be another sign that takeovers in the US are coming back into fashion. The poison pill, a takeover defence that became one of the most potent symbols of the 1980s battle for corporate control, made a notable return last week as Dr Pepper, the US's third-largest soft drinks group, armed its defences against the UK's Cadbury Schweppes.

Poison pills lose none of their potency

The fact that companies rarely adopt such poison pill defences these days could be partly explained by the fall-off in predatory bids. However, there is a more powerful reason: most companies already have them. No less than 331 of the companies in the S&P 500 have pills in place, most dating from the mid- to late-1980s. They follow a number of patterns, but all have the same ultimate objective: to deter unwanted bidders either by restricting their voting rights or diluting their stake by offering shares cheaply to other shareholders - the route taken by Dr Pepper.

Add in the companies located in states that have takeover protection enshrined in statute, such as Delaware, and 87 per cent of listed US companies have some form of defence. Such devices still arouse passionate shareholder antagonism. The United Shareholders Association pressure group promptly denounced Dr Pepper's move, saying it was designed to protect incumbent management rather than shareholder interests. Could such antipathy be misplaced? Experience from the last merger and acquisition wave suggests that takeover defences do not stop takeovers, and may actually force aggressive bidders to pay more for their acquisitions.



Cadbury fails to sweeten up Dr Pepper

DR PEPPER/Seven-Up and Cadbury Schweppes have often eyed each other longingly but seem unable to agree who should wear the trousers. Whether the US company is determined to stay independent - or merely playing hard to get - is as uncertain as the ultimate intentions of the UK group. Cadbury, which raised its holding in Dr Pepper to 25.9 per cent last month by buying a 20 per cent stake from the Prudential insurance company, has not ruled out further share purchases eventually. But its immediate aim is further co-operation. That suggestion has been coolly received by Dr Pepper,

which has indicated that its idea of closer links would involve taking control of Cadbury's north American beverages business. Dr Pepper makes most of the UK company's soft drinks concentrates in the US and distributes some of its brands there. What is beyond dispute is the industrial logic favouring a link-up. Added to Dr Pepper's 10.6 per cent of the US soft drinks market, Cadbury's 3.4 per cent would create a force better able to stand up to Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, the industry leaders. A deal would provide much needed sales channels and distribution power for Cadbury's US soft drink sales, which rely on a frag-

mented network of small bottlers. In return, Dr Pepper's portfolio would gain from the addition of Cadbury's profitable range of niche brands, including Schweppes, Sunkist and Canada Dry. Elsewhere, the two companies' strengths are reversed. Cadbury's operations in Europe, Australia, Africa and Latin America would benefit Dr Pepper, which is weakly represented in international markets, where Seven-Up in any case belongs to PepsiCo. Though Dr Pepper is highly profitable, its expansion is constrained by heavy debt, the legacy of a 1986 leveraged buy-out in which Cadbury participated. The UK company, by contrast, would

bring to any deal a robust balance sheet and strong cash flow. Nonetheless, many analysts think Cadbury would be pressed to pay the £1.5bn or more needed to buy the rest of Dr Pepper. Some think a better option would be to trade control of its American drinks business for a bigger stake in the US company. But any such outcome would require the pair's mutual attractions to prevail over suspicion of each other's motives. As Mr David Lang, of stockbrokers Henderson and Crosthwaite, says: "They are natural bedfellows, but neither wants to be date-raped."

Guy de Jonquieres

A new route to

Emu offered by inflation goals

The European Community's monetary committee meets in Brussels tomorrow, giving officials a first chance to pick over the remains of the European exchange rate mechanism. While there has been little official comment on the ERM's future since the near collapse of the system and the adoption of 15 per cent fluctuation bands last month, attitudes have been polarising among those concerned with international monetary policy making. France and Belgium still hanker after narrow fluctuations, while the Netherlands still insists on an attachment to Belgium's decision last Thursday to raise short-term interest rates to protect the Belgian franc on the very day that the government announced a sharp increase in unemployment to 14.1 per cent in August from 13.5 per cent in July.

Elsewhere, however, there is a rapidly dwindling faith in narrow bands as a way of securing price stability or providing a "glide path" to economic and monetary union (Emu). Officials and economists do want some monetary discipline in Europe, however. A free for all, with the attendant risks of competitive devaluation and eventual inflation, could seriously disrupt the European single market as well as damage hopes of eventually moving to Emu.

So if narrow bands are not the answer, what should be put in their place? The debate in the ERM and the realisation that freely flowing capital movements could undermine any attempt to rebuild the old structure have prompted a growing interest in those countries that manage their domestic monetary affairs through inflation targets.

New Zealand and Canada pioneered the use of inflation targets to determine monetary policy and have so far operated them with success. Britain followed suit last autumn after

sterling was forced to quit the ERM. Other countries have also adopted targets: Sweden converted to the system at the beginning of this year. Mr Lars Svensson, professor of international economics at Stockholm University and an adviser to the Swedish central bank, says Sweden, which previously had linked its krona to the Ecu, realised it had overestimated the capacity of fixed exchange rate systems as a means of promoting stability. "Monetary stability and credibility need to be built at home," he says.

But how can domestic inflation targets replace an exchange rate regime covering a number of countries, or point the way forward to Emu? The answer could lie in a judicious mixture of minor alterations to the Maastricht Treaty and peer group pressure among the EC countries. The treaty could be strengthened by adding a specific goal for member states of price stability (usually defined as 0 to 2 per cent consumer price inflation). The convergence criteria already define objectives for inflation, interest rates and budget deficits, but only in relation to other member countries and not by any absolute standard. EC member states, setting their inflation targets with the aim of achieving price stability, would have to accept scru-

Economics Notebook By Peter Norman

If the EC member states pursued such policies they should gradually achieve economic convergence and be in a position some years hence to move to Emu with its single currency and central bank. Because there would be no narrow ERM bands, there would be no obvious target for speculative operators, such as the New York-based hedge funds, to attack. One problem is that the EC's experience with peer group pressure has been mixed. Existing surveillance procedures in the monetary committee and the economic and finance ministers' council have had only limited success in steering EC economies towards convergence. However, the community could strengthen peer group procedures by adapting the

FTC to look at Merck bid for Medco

By Richard Waters
in New York

THE expected \$60n takeover by Merck, the US's biggest drugs company, of Medco Container Services, the country's largest mail-order drugs distributor, has run into a potential setback with the Federal Trade Commission's indication that it plans to scrutinise the deal more closely. An FTC request to the two companies for more information about the merger was made at almost the last possible moment under the Hart-Scott-Rodino anti-trust regulations. The waiting period under the regulations, which would otherwise have expired last Friday, will now stretch until at least 20 days after the two companies respond to the FTC's queries.

Merck, which announced the news after the stock market had closed on Friday, said that the request for more information had been made only late in the afternoon and said it had not yet seen details of the FTC's inquiry. It added, though, that it was confident the deal would go ahead in the fourth quarter of the year, as originally planned. The takeover has aroused concerns among some competitors, who fear the deal could cut off an important distribution channel. Medco has said that it will continue to distribute other companies' drugs, although it expects Merck's products to account for a larger proportion of its sales. The deal is also subject to approval by Medco's shareholders.

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STREAMLINE HOLDINGS LIMITED

Management Buy-out of the
Road Services and Building Products Divisions of Colas

from
SHELL VENTURES

Total value
£72 MILLION

Institutional equity arranged and underwritten by
Charterhouse Development Capital

Legal advisers to Charterhouse
Dickson Minto

Reporting accountants
Coopers & Lybrand

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Charterhouse Development Capital Limited, 60 Walling Street, London EC4M 3BX
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the number of calls for help has increased from 100 in 1990 to 150 in 1991. On top of that, the number of owners per boat has increased from 2 to 20. "We've been making adjustments to the boat trading system to increase the rate and owners per boat in the next three years. Even that will be small by the time next year opens. The aim is to have a better server and better boats. It's a good accommodation for accounts for the holiday season."

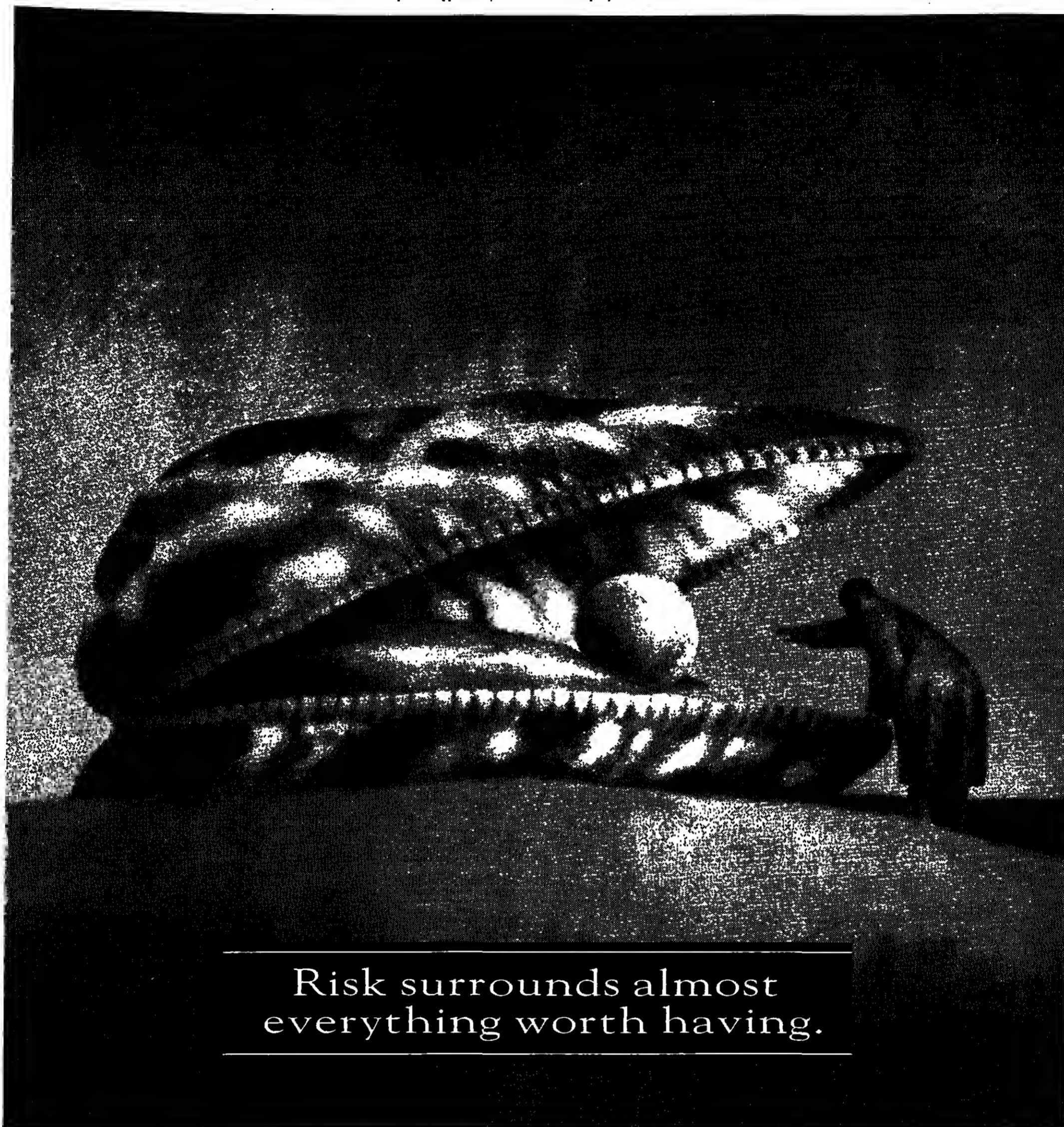
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COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Use of Intel technology casts shadow on AMD

By Louise Kehoe
in San Francisco

ADVANCED Micro Devices has disclosed that its latest microprocessor chips, to be introduced later this month, will incorporate Intel technology that is at the centre of a long-running legal battle between the two Silicon Valley chip-makers.

AMD's sales of 30m clones of Intel microprocessors have greatly boosted the company's revenues and earnings over the past two years. However, the legal disputes with Intel - the world's largest semiconductor manufacturer - have cast uncertainty over AMD's future microprocessor sales and could potentially make the company liable for substantial penalties. Previously, AMD had said that it would lift the cloud of legal uncertainty and achieve "technological independence" from Intel by designing its own microcode for the new chips. Microcode is the internal software that controls the functions of a microprocessor chip.

However, AMD now says its "independently derived" microcode for new 486 microprocessors - widely used in personal computers - is not entirely original.

About 25 per cent of the software is "substantially similar" to software Intel created for an earlier generation of 386 micro-

processors, the company said.

"The (microcode) development team was exposed to certain Intel 386 intellectual property that had been awarded to us by the arbitrator of our breach-of-contract dispute with Intel," said Mr Richard Lovgren, AMD associate general counsel.

He acknowledged that an appeals court ruling in June had overturned the arbitrator's award, compromising AMD's right to use the Intel microcode. Mr Tom Dunlap, Intel's chief counsel, said: "Once again, it seems that AMD would rather take legal risks than develop products independently."

AMD, however, expressed optimism that its rights to the software will be restored by the California Supreme Court, which last week granted the company's request for a review of the June ruling.

"We are very pleased the Supreme Court has agreed to review a ruling that we believe is wrong and manifestly unjust," said Mr W.J. Sanders III, AMD chairman and chief executive. The review effectively vacates the negative ruling of the appeals court, AMD said.

AMD also noted that it has been granted a new trial, to begin in November, of a related microcode copyright infringement dispute with Intel.

Toronto SE launches index

By Robert Gibbins in Montreal

THE TORONTO Stock Exchange is to launch on October 1 an index of 100 most actively-traded stocks. It is designed to help institutional investors measure Canadian equity performance more accurately.

The TSE-300 Index, now among the most widely used, includes smaller capitalisation stocks. The new 100 index will contain only large capitalisation stocks and the most liquid securities.

It will comprise stocks representing 83 per cent of the total

capitalisation of the TSE-300. A range of derivative products will be ready within six months.

The new TSE-100 was given a value of 250 at August 31 and will reflect market changes since then when the TSE begins reporting on October 1. The TSE-300 continues, and those stocks not included in the TSE-100 will later form the basis of a new TSE-200.

The 100 index will be updated each April at the same time as the 300 Stocks in the 100 are classified into resource, industrial, interest-sensitive and consumer products groups.

Sime Darby increases earnings by 11%

By Kieran Cooke
in Kuala Lumpur

SIME DARBY, the Malaysia-based conglomerate which claims to be south-east Asia's biggest multinational, has announced pre-tax profits of M\$540.8m (US\$331m) for the year to June 30 1993.

The figure represents an 11 per cent rise over the previous year and more than four times Sime Darby's 1987 profits.

Group turnover was M\$7.8bn, a 14 per cent rise over last year. A final gross dividend of 18.5 Malaysian cents has been recommended, compared with 14.5 cents last year.

Sime Darby, once largely plantation based, is now involved in a wide range of activities including the manufacture of rubber products, the oil and gas industry, property and motor and heavy equipment franchises.

Sime's highest cash earner was once again its operations in Hong Kong, where it is the main automotive and heavy equipment distributor. Pre-tax profits from Hong Kong were up 33 per cent to M\$186m compared with M\$142m last year.

"This remarkable achievement is the result of a booming economy in southern China and has taken place in spite of the fact that the future of the new Hong Kong airport and the Legislative Council elections remain unresolved," said the group.

A cutback in logging led to a decline in earnings from the group's heavy equipment business in Malaysia, but revenues from the group's substantial involvement in the local oil and gas industry made a significant contribution to overall profits.

The plantations division benefited from continuing strong prices for palm oil, though sagging rubber prices resulted in lower production and affected overall plantations performance.

Mr Nik Mohamed Yacob, the new group chief executive, said that in the short term Sime's main priority was to turn round its insurance business, which continues to make a loss.

Stockholm approves Volvo/Renault merger

By Hugh Carnegie in
Stockholm and
John Ridding in Paris

SWEDEN'S centre-right government has given its blessing to the full merger, expected to be announced in Paris this week, possibly today, between Volvo, the country's premier manufacturing company, and Renault, the state-controlled French car and truckmaker due to be privatised shortly.

"Volvo is very important to the Swedish economy, but this is a market-oriented government," said a senior government official. "Our view is that Volvo as a private company

must do what it thinks is right for Volvo."

Both companies want to announce the merger before the start of the Frankfurt motor show tomorrow. However, a French government official said yesterday that the agreement had yet to be signed and a delay until tomorrow or Wednesday would not matter.

The merger will create one of Europe's four biggest car manufacturers and the world's second biggest truck group. It will set the seal on a three-year old industrial alliance which began with an exchange of cross shareholdings in 1990.

The French government, wary of domestic political sensitivities surrounding the merger, has insisted on a dominant role in the partnership for Renault, which it has placed on a list of 21 state-controlled groups it seeks to sell in an ambitious programme to be launched this autumn.

Motor industry analysts believe the most probable scenario is that the French car group, currently 79 per cent owned by the state, will have a 65 per cent stake in the joint company.

Renault's chairman, Mr Louis Schweitzer, will be in charge of day-to-day operations, with the flamboy-

ant Mr Pehr Gyllenhammar, who has led Volvo since 1971, as head of the supervisory board.

Aware of the sensitivities in Sweden also over the future of one of the symbols of the country's industrial prowess, Mr Gyllenhammar has kept Mr Carl Bildt, the Swedish prime minister, abreast of the negotiations. Volvo is hoping that other political and market reaction to the merger will be similar to that of Mr Bildt.

Most analysts in Stockholm view a 35 per cent share for Volvo as a reasonable outcome.

"You can never be sure of anything, but if people look at

this in a neutral way they must see that it is the best deal for shareholders, given the alternative of a future on our own," said a Volvo official.

According to expectations, French control will be wielded through a majority stake in a joint holding company and through a stake in a unit which groups the automotive operations of the two companies.

But Volvo is expected to retain a powerful influence. Volvo will hold smaller stakes in the holding company and the industrial unit. It is likely to have veto powers over strategic issues.

Kuok tipped to buy S China Morning Post

By Simon Davies in Hong Kong

TRADING in South China Morning Post shares was due to resume today amid expectations that this week will see Hong Kong's best-known newspaper fall into the hands of one of China's best-loved overseas businessmen.

Mr Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation announced on Friday that it was negotiating the sale of its 50 per cent stake in SCMP, and while the buyer's name has not been confirmed, it is widely expected to be a consortium led by Malaysian-born "Sugar King" Robert Kuok.

The share sale would trigger a general takeover for the company, under Hong Kong's takeover and mergers code, but local newspaper coverage has raised expectations of an offer below Friday's closing price of HK\$5.35. Based on that price, the Murdoch stake would be valued at HK\$40m (US\$5.16m).

Mr Kuok commands one of the largest business empires in south-east Asia, and having made his fortune through sugar trading in Malaysia, he now controls a wide range of businesses, from hotel and property development to trading.

He has a long track record of investment in Hong Kong, where he is now based. He recently floated his Hong Kong and Chinese hotel interests, as the HK\$6.5bn market capitalised Shangri-La Asia. However, the purchase of SCMP would be his largest and most high profile investment in the colony.

It is his China connections which will attract most attention, if he finalises the deal. Mr Kuok was behind Beijing's first major internationally-funded property development, the US\$450m World Trade Centre.

He also owns 13 per cent of Hong Kong's largest mainland-controlled investment vehicle, Citic Pacific, and has substantial

investments in property and trading in China. Beijing would not welcome criticism from business partners, and is very sensitive to its media coverage in Hong Kong.

As one senior employee at the SCMP stated: "One of the ironies of this deal is that in a week's time, Rupert Murdoch may be held up as the last bastion of free speech and democracy in Hong Kong."

Mr Murdoch had implemented few changes at the newspaper. He treated it as a cash cow and paid out the bulk of earnings in dividends, while playing no apparent role in its editorial content.

He is likely to make more than HK\$5bn profit from the deal, and he was clearly concerned about the future of running an English language newspaper in Hong Kong after its 1997 hand-over to China, from both a political and business perspective.

NEWS DIGEST

French retailer trebles profit

CASINO, one of France's largest food retailing groups, achieved a three-fold increase in pre-tax profits to FF60.1m (\$10.32m) in the first half of the year, writes John Ridding in Paris.

The rise from FF18m in the first six months of 1992 reflected its merger with Rallye, the supermarket group, at the end of last year.

Net attributable profits rose much more slowly, increasing by 2.5 per cent to FF17.6m. Sales rose slightly from FF33.25m to FF33.75m. But the group said that the

increase was impressive against the background of falling consumer demand and supermarket price wars arising from the recession in France.

In a statement to shareholders, Casino expressed optimism about the remainder of the year.

It said that cost cutting measures introduced over the past two years were beginning to bear fruit and that the merger with Rallye was progressing smoothly.

■ Northern Telecom, the equipment manufacturing affiliate of BCE of Canada and Germany's Robert Bosch, have dropped a joint venture to manufacture transmission equipment, writes Robert Gibbins in Montreal.

Last March the companies announced the venture to produce equipment under the CCITT global standard. Each planned to put certain assets, technology and personnel into the project and Nortel would have gained a distribution channel for some of its equipment in Germany.

At the weekend the two companies would not enlarge on a statement, saying they have "strengthened their relationship and are co-operating in other areas of mutual interest, including several global joint opportunities."

Analysts regarded the ending of the joint venture as a potential setback for Nortel. "Germany was a key market in Nortel's strategy to become a leader in European telecom

equipment," said Mr Fredericks Larkin, of Bunting Warburg in Toronto.

However, industry sources stressed that international market changes may have dictated the move.

Nortel, in a US\$400m note issue filing, said it will contend a US tax re-assessment for 1990-95, potentially requiring payment of US\$450m. The company said it has a strong case to contest the IRS claim.

■ GTE, the US telecommunications group which has already shed 6,400 people through voluntary separation programmes this year, is to cut its workforce by a further 1,000 through compulsory redundancies, writes Richard Waters in New York.

Poland to sell 60% of Bank Slaski

By Christopher Bobinski
in Warsaw

POLAND is to offer 60 per cent of the equity of Bank Slaski for sale in the second privatisation of the country's nine state-owned commercial banks created in 1990.

The planned disposal of the 5.6m shares comes after the sale earlier this year of Wloclawski Bank Kwatery (WBK), in which the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development took a 28 per cent share. Now the EBRD is expected to bid for a share of the "large investor" tranche making up 45 per cent of Bank Slaski's equity for which a tender is to be announced on September 14.

The share price agreed under the tender will then be treated as a marker for the remaining 15 per cent of the equity which is to be offered to "small" investors later in the year.

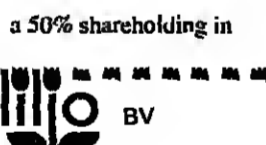
Mr Leslaw Paga, head of Poland's Securities Commission, which approved the public offer, said the price for small investors would be "no higher" than that for large investors, but could be lower.

The procedure is designed to avoid controversies which accompanied the WBK privatisation, where the offer price was set before a boom on the Warsaw stock exchange giving investors handsome profits and leading to charges that the bank had been underpriced.



Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd

has acquired



a subsidiary of
Kemira Oy

The undersigned acted as
financial advisor to
Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd.
in this transaction

The Mitsubishi Bank, Limited

September 1993

The Mitsubishi Bank, Limited is a member of the SFA



Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd

has acquired



and its subsidiaries

The undersigned acted as
financial advisor to
Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd.
in this transaction

The Mitsubishi Bank, Limited

September 1993

The Mitsubishi Bank, Limited is a member of the SFA

Inter Capital Limited

U.S. \$50,000,000

Floating Rate Notes due 1997

Notice is hereby given that the

Interest Rate for the period

from 3rd September, 1993 to

3rd March, 1994 is 4.8125%.

The Floating Rate Note Interest

Amount payable on 3rd

March, 1994 is U.S. \$241.96

per U.S. \$10,000 and U.S.

\$6,049.05 per U.S. \$250,000.

In accordance with clause 7(c)

of the Terms and Conditions of

the Notes, the Interest Rate

applicable for those Note-

holders who have elected to

Redeem their Notes on 3rd

March, 1994 is 3.9375% and

the Floating Rate Note Interest

Amount payable will be

U.S. \$197.97 per U.S.

\$10,000 and U.S. \$4,949.22

per U.S. \$250,000.

Bankers Trust Company, London Agent Bank

EUROFIMA

European Company for the Finance

of Railroad Rolling Stock

U.S. \$250,000,000

Deutsche Bank LIBOR Based

Floating Rate Notes due 2002

For the Interest Period 3rd

September, 1993 to 3rd

December, 1993 the Notes will

carry an Interest Rate of

5.375% per annum with Cou-

pon Amounts of U.S. \$13.59,

U.S. \$135.87 and U.S.

\$13,586.81 per U.S. \$1,000,

U.S. \$10,000 and U.S.

\$1,000,000 Notes respec-

tively. The relevant Interest

Payment Date will be 3rd

December, 1993.

Swiss Bank Corporation

Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft

U.S. \$250,000,000 Subordinated Floating Rate

Notes Due 2002

In accordance with the provisions of the Notes the following notice

is hereby given:

Interest Period: September 3, 1993 to March 3, 1994 (181 days)

Interest Rate: 3% p.a.

Coupon Amount: U.S. \$ 125.69 per U.S. \$ 1,000 Note

U.S. \$ 251.38 per U.S. \$ 1,000 Note

U.S. \$ 2,513.89 per U.S. \$ 10,000 Note

Payment Date: March 3, 1994

Frankfurt/Main, September 1993

COMMERZBANK

Notice to holders of Bearer Shares

SCHROEDER INTERNATIONAL SELECTION FUND

Notice to holders of Bearer Shares

Notice to holders of Bearer Shares

Notice to holders of Bearer Shares

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BANCO di NAPOLI

Joining stock company

Registered office in Naples - Via Toledo 177

Company capital: Lit. 1,063,052,000,000

and Reserves Lit. 3,434,240,988,614

Registered at the Court of Naples, registration no. 4180/01

Registered at C.C.I.A.A. in Naples at no. 487026

Tax Code and VAT Number 0935890635

NOTICE OF ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

Notice is given that, immediately after the Extraordinary Meeting of Shareholders, convened at the Registered Office in Naples, Via Toledo, 177, on 21 September, 1993 at 12:30pm for the first meeting and, if necessary, on 22 September, 1993, for a second meeting, at the same time and place, as per the notice that appeared in the Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 201 part II on 27 August, an Ordinary Meeting will be held, having the following Agenda:

Substitution of resigning Directors and nomination of the Company Chairman in accordance with art. 13 of the Company By-Laws.</

INTERNATIONAL BONDS

Austria and Exim deals revive Euroyen sector

THE LAUNCH last week of two large yen-denominated Eurobond issues by top-quality borrowers has helped to revive investor interest in the Euroyen sector of the international bond market.

The Export-Import Bank of Japan raised ¥75bn through an offering of 10-year Eurobonds and the Republic of Austria established a new benchmark at the long end of the Euroyen market with its ¥60bn issue of 10-year Eurobonds.

Syndicate managers say that Exim's 10-year Eurobond issue has helped to open up the Euroyen sector for other Japanese government-guaranteed entities.

In the past, the Japanese finance ministry had discouraged them from raising yen-denominated funds outside the domestic bond market. However, the ministry has changed its stance in recent years.

So far, the Japanese Development Bank (JDB) has been the only government-guaranteed entity to issue in Euroyen. It has launched two such offerings in the past two years, and is thought to be considering a third, of the same size and maturity as Exim's.

Austria followed rapidly on Exim's heels, and both issues have provided liquidity which is badly needed at the long end of the Euro-

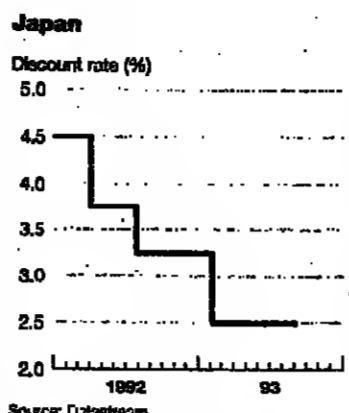
yen sector. Both issues were priced against the World Bank's yen global bond due 2003. Exim's issue was priced to yield six basis points above the yield on World Bank's bond. Some managers said the issue was generously priced.

By contrast, the pricing of Austria's issue, launched at a spread of 13 basis points over the yield on the World Bank bond, was widely regarded as tight. Some syndicate managers said the spread should have been five basis points wider to compensate for the extra two years of the bonds' life. However, a spokesman at the lead manager, Yamachi International, said last week the pricing was justified by the quality of the borrower and demand for long-dated paper.

The pricing also reflected Yamachi's view that Japanese interest rates will be cut in the near future, which would increase the attraction of the 4% per cent coupon.

Syndicate managers say these two issues could herald a steady stream of Euroyen issues over the coming months, which would stem the decline in volume in this area of the Euroyen market.

According to IFR Securities Data, the percentage of all Eurobonds issued in yen fell in the first eight months of this year, to 10 per cent



of the total from 11.5 per cent in the same period last year. By contrast, sterling's share rose from 8.7 to 12.6 per cent and the D-Mark's to from 9.7 to 14.5 per cent. The dollar's share remains the largest at around 36 per cent.

The data also show that the yen dropped to fourth position in the table of the preferred issuing currencies from second position.

The lack of swap opportunities this year has deterred non-Japanese issuers from borrowing in yen. Many issuers only tap the Euroyen sector if they can swap the proceeds of their offering into dollars which

are fixed at a margin below the London interbank offered rate (Libor).

However, swap conditions have improved recently and Exim is thought to have exchanged the proceeds from its offering into dollars, achieving an all-in cost of funds of 20 basis points below Libor.

Non-Japanese borrowers have also been hindered by the yen's appreciation against other currencies in recent months. Syndicate managers say they are now looking more closely at the Euroyen sector, encouraged by expectations that the yen has reached its peak.

"Many borrowers would like to borrow in yen when it is close to its all-time high because their currency exposure should be reduced in the long term as a result," says one syndicate manager.

Expectations of a further cut in Japanese interest rates to boost the country's flagging economic growth have further enhanced the market conditions for borrowers. Many economists expect a cut of up to 1% points in the discount rate, which is currently at 4% per cent.

The Japanese government bond market has been strengthening as a result of the hopes of a cut in rates. Analysts believe that after the cut, interest rates are likely to remain low for the foreseeable future.

In the light of such forecasts, investors are keen to buy long-dated yen bonds which offer a coupon with some premium over the current low yields in the government bond market.

Yet despite the favourable conditions for borrowers and the current demand among investors for yen Eurobonds, syndicate managers are careful not to launch too many new issues for fear of saturating the market.

The Euroyen market is less liquid than other sectors of the international bond market because of it is still limited to the highest credits, namely sovereign and supranational borrowers, or triple A-rated corporate names.

As a result, many yen Eurobond issues become illiquid very soon after their launch. This is a drawback for investors wanting to sell their bonds before they are redeemed so they are reluctant to buy too many at issue. "It is a self-perpetuating problem," says one syndicate manager.

Last week's deals helped to provide liquidity at the longer end of the market but syndicate managers say it will take a considerable time before this vicious circle is broken.

Antonia Sharpe

RISK AND REWARD

Broadening the horizons of currency exposure management



UNTIL recently, the use of derivatives by non-financial companies had only sparked interest among shareholders if disaster struck. In these instances - such as Allied Lyons' £150m loss in 1991, when a treasury official wrote uncovered currency options - the focus tended to be on the cause of the short-term hit, usually speculation or inadequate management controls.

However, more attention is now being paid to the broader implications of a company's policy on currency risk management. The volatility in exchange rates in the last year, and the virtual collapse of the exchange rate mechanism, has heightened the awareness of institutional investors of the potential impact on profitability of a company's approach to currency exposure.

Last year, the Association of Corporate Treasurers published a set of draft guidelines designed to make it easier for institutional investors to analyse the implications of foreign exchange management. The subject has been a matter of intense debate, since there is some opposition to increasing disclosure, but definitive guidelines are expected this autumn. Mr Gerald Leahy of the ACT said there was a strong feeling there should be better qualitative, if not quantitative, information on treasury policy.

Stock analysts are also waking up to the importance of currency hedging in analysing an international company's performance prospects. For example, Credit Lyonnais Laing recently published a ground-breaking piece of research on the UK drinks industry entitled "Currency hedging in the drinks sector", which provides an unusually detailed examination of the practices of companies like Grand Metropolitan, Guinness and Bass.

As well as defining the extent and nature of these companies' foreign exchange exposure, analyst Ma Julie Bower details their policies on dealing with their exposure.

She notes that in general, "too much attention is paid to the exposure of companies to currency movements as reported in their accounts, and too little to the underlying long-term competitive

positions of companies under various exchange rate scenarios".

There are three types of currency exposure: transaction exposure, which is the exposure to exchange rate movements between a sale and its settlement; translation exposure, which relates to the effects of currency movements on a company's accounts when reported in the home currency, and is held to be of significance only for accounting purposes; and economic exposure, which describes the extent to which the present value of expected future cash flows changes with currencies.

Ms Bower argues that companies tend to concentrate too little on the third of these categories. "[Economic exposure] is a true exposure which managements should be seeking to optimise through a financial management programme that complements their long-term strategic planning process."

She makes the important point that hedging can be financial or strategic. For example, Japan's Nikka Whisky Distilling Company bought a large Scottish distillery in 1989, reducing the operating risk of being dependent on imported whisky from Scotland for its own Japanese blended whiskies by hedging its long-term economic exposure to the sterling/yen exchange rate through an investment in the home market of its suppliers.

Undoubtedly, the pressure on companies to provide better information is increasing. Last year, Mr Hugh Jenkins, chief executive of Prudential Portfolio Managers, described information given by most companies as "minimal" even though the Report and Accounts is the correct medium for disclosure.

Most senior managers claim they are anti-speculation, yet they follow selective hedging policies designed to protect against anticipated adverse currency movements. Yet in practice it is often the case that hedging is only useful in protecting the company against unexpected changes.

The consequence for investors is uncertainty. If a fund manager buys a UK stock because he thinks the company will benefit from increased US earnings, he needs to know if the dollar exposure of that company is hedged. At present, he is often in the dark.

Tracy Corrigan

NEW INTERNATIONAL BOND ISSUES

Borrower	Amount m.	Maturity	Coupon %	Price	Yield %	Launch spread bp	Book runner
US DOLLARS							
Waltco Co. (off)	100	Sep.1997	1.25	100	-	-	Wells Int'l. (Europe)
Edwards Co. (off)	60	Sep.1997	1.25	100	-	-	Nomura International
General Electric Capital Corp.	250	Sep.1998	4.25	99.85R	4.362	+10 (4 1/4%-0)	UBS
Petrobras	200	Sep.1998	7.50	98.947R	7.520	+35 (4 1/4%-0)	Beer Stearns Int'l.
Grupo Silar	100	Sep.1998	6.750	98.765R	6.810	+400 (4 1/4%-0)	Lazard Freres
Hemera Land & Development	60	Sep.2003	3.5	100	-	-	Jardine Fleming
Crédit Lyonnais	300	Oct.1998	4.25	98.55R	4.413	+18 (4 1/4%-0)	Sakura Finance Int'l.
Crédit Lyonnais	150	Sep.2005	6	99.75R	-	-	CSFB
BNL (off)	100	Oct.2005	6	99.75R	-	-	CSFB
BNL (off)	100	Oct.2005	6	100R	-	-	Morgan Stanley Int'l.
Banco Overseas	100	Sep.1997	6	100R	-	-	Servot International
Goldman Sachs Group	125	Oct.2005	6	98.75R	-	-	Goldman Sachs Int'l.
MDX Public Co. (off)	60	Sep.2003	4 1/4%-5	100	-	-	Nomura International
D-MARKS							
Dapla France	1.5bn	Sep.2003	6.375	99.7R	6.417	+24 (6 1/4%-0)	Dresdner/Morgan Stanley
Deutsche Bau & Bodenbank (off)	200	Sep.2003	6.375	101.65	-	-	Tinkhaus & Burkhart
Frankfurter Hypobank (off)	100	Oct.2003	6	100	-	-	Tinkhaus & Burkhart
SGZB	150	Oct.2003	6.25	102	-	-	Tinkhaus & Burkhart
STERLING							
Wah Permanent Bkt	100	Oct.1998	6	98.88R	-	-	UBS
FRENCH FRANCS							
RATP	2.5bn	Sep.2003	6	97.825R	6.300	+18 (5 1/4%-0)	Société Générale
Region d'Ile de France	600	Sep.2000	6	98.55R	6.081	+22 (5 1/4%-0)	Banque Paribas
Crédit Local de France	1.5bn	Sep.2005	6.25	98.26R	6.480	+22 (5 1/4%-0)	Crédit Lyonnais
SNCF (off)	1bn	Sep.2013	6.75	98.72R	6.870	+18 (5 1/4%-12)	Société Générale
Soc. Gén. Acceptance	500	Dec.2003	6	99.4R	-	-	Société Générale
YEN							
Export-Import Bank of Japan	75bn	Oct.2003	4.375	99.73R	4.408	+25 (4 1/4%-0)	Nomura International
Republic of Austria	60bn	Sep.2005	4.5	100R	4.500	-	Yamachi Int'l. (Europe)
Indochina International	10bn	Mar.1997	3.75	100.425R	-	-	Merrill Lynch Int'l.
Obayashi Finance Int'l. (off)	10bn	Sep.1998	6	100.225	-	-	Servot International

Borrower	Amount m.	Maturity	Coupon %	Price	Yield %	Launch spread bp	Book runner
CANADIAN DOLLARS							
Province of British Columbia	400	Sep.2005	7.25	98.8R	7.404	+50 (7 1/4%-0)	Scotiabank
City of Quebec, Tranche A	35	Oct.1998	6.875	102.05	6.333	-	BNL, Luxembourg
City of Quebec, Tranche B	21	Oct.2003	7.625	101.85	7.343	-	BNL, Luxembourg
ITALIAN LIRA							
Rabobank Nederland	500bn	Oct.2003	zero	46.428	7.975	-	IMI Bank Luxembourg
KW Int'l. Finance	150bn	Sep.1998	(a)	100.6R	-	-	BNL, Luxembourg
Crédit Local de France	150bn	Dec.1998	(a)	100.375	-	-	Credito Italiano
HONG KONG DOLLARS							
International Finance Corp.	500	Oct.2000	(a)	100.4	-	-	Société Générale Asia
SWISS FRANCS							
Verbund, Austria	250	Oct.2006	4.5	102.5	4.230	-	Bank von Ernst & Cie
Verbund, Austria	150	Oct.2000	2.5	100	-	-	Swiss Bank Corp.
Norddeutsche LB (off)	115	Oct.2000	2.25	100	-	-	Swiss Bank Corp.
Bremer Landesbank (off)	100	Oct.1998	2.75	100	-	-	UBS
Euroalliance Hypobank (off)	100	Oct.2000	2.75	100	-	-	UBS
Art Life Co. (off)	45	Dec.1997	0.25R	100	-	-	Nikko Bank (Switz)

This announcement appears as a matter of record only.

BARIVEN, S.A.



\$230,000,000

Trade Finance Facility

Guaranteed by:

PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.



PDVSA

Arranger:

The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A.

Senior Lead Managers:
The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A.
ABN AMRO Bank, N.V.
Dresdner Bank Group
Generale Bank S.A. /N.V.

Lead Managers:
Banque Française du Commerce Extérieur
Royal Bank of Canada

Co-Lead Managers:
Corporacion Andina de Fomento-CAF

Managers:
Bayerische Vereinsbank AG, New York Branch
(Union Bank of Bavaria)
Creditanstalt-Bankverein
National Bank of Kuwait, S.A.K.
Vereins- und Westbank AG

Co-Managers:
Banca CRT S.p.A. - New York Branch
Bank Brussels Lambert
The First National Bank of Chicago

Agent:

The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A.

July 1993



CHASE

This announcement appears as a matter of record only.



IRSA

IRSA Inversiones y Representaciones S.A.

International Offering

of

1,500,471 Global Depositary Shares

Each Representing Ten Shares

of Common Stock

(par value Pesos 1 per share)

at

US\$16.83 per GDS

Baring Brothers & Co., Limited

Arnhold & S. Bleichroeder, Inc. ♦ Merrill Lynch International, Limited



BARINGS

July, 1993

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS

US MONEY AND CREDIT

Wall St divided on strength of rally

THE US credit market reached a historic landmark on Friday when the yield on the benchmark 30-year Treasury issue fell below 6 per cent for the first time in its 16-year life. But, amid the celebrating, Wall Street Cassandras were quick to wonder how soon the remarkable bond market rally of the past few months might go into sharp reverse.

The factor which finally took the long bond through 6 per cent was a surprisingly poor unemployment report for August on Friday morning, which suggested at first glance that the economy was growing more weakly than expected.

By the close of trading, the issue was showing a yield of 5.94 per cent, down from 6.14 per cent a week earlier. The rest of the yield curve also dipped by 20-22 basis points, with the 10-year note ending the week at 5.38 per cent.

With US interest rates at their lowest in 25 years, investors face a dilemma: is the bond rally of the past six

weeks a sign of a seriously overheated market, which is bound to end in a sharp correction and an upward turn in the interest rate cycle? In short, is the bond market rally about to peak out?

Or does the rally mean the market is entering a new trading range, reflecting an economy facing a prolonged period of low growth and low inflation, and that this could push interest rates down even further, back to the level of the 1960s? Wall Street is divided. Few analysts forecast the long bond would breach 6 per cent, yet after the event many argue that the rally remains relatively secure, though it is bound to suffer short-term corrections. A minority, however, warn that the market is seriously overbought.

"The main factors behind the rally provide ammunition for both camps. First, many statistics suggest US economic growth remains subdued, and President Bill Clinton's tax increases and healthcare

reforms could further retard expansion.

However, last week the government revised its estimate of second-quarter GDP growth up to 1.8 per cent, compared to the 1.6 per cent initially reported. And August's employment statistics were not nearly as bad as the headline figures would suggest. Businesses may not be hiring new workers, yet hours worked are rising at a respectable 2.5 per cent annual rate.

Coincidentally, the surprisingly poor August figures came exactly a year after very similar statistics prompted the Federal Reserve into its last easing move, and some of Friday's bond rally may have stemmed from hopes of a repeat performance by the central bank. Yet the Fed seems unlikely to change a rates regime which, by underscoring its anti-inflation hawkishness, has been a powerful contributor to the current rally.

Nor do there appear to be any significant inflationary clouds on the horizon. The

only statistic of note to be released this week will be Friday's producer price index for August. The overall PPI may show the first rise in four months, but the increase is expected to be modest, at around 0.2 to 0.3 per cent.

Apart from economic fundamentals, market forces driving the bond market rally have included the Clinton administration's reduction in the supply of 30-year bonds, and heavy demand from both banks, taking advantage of the steep yield curve, and mutual fund investors seeking higher returns. Flows of cash into bond funds jumped 22 per cent in July to a record \$13bn.

There are no immediate signs of this tide turning, yet mutual fund investors could prove volatile if a run of adverse economic statistics suggests the market is peaking out. Any correction - be it the turn of the interest rate cycle or not - could prove nasty.

Martin Dickson

BELGIAN BONDS

Snowballing debt keeps yields above 7%

IN the European bond market rush for the pot of gold, Belgium has been left at the back of the queue. While its EC partners have seen phenomenal rallies in the past few months the Belgian bond market has languished.

A league table of international debt markets monitored by J.P. Morgan shows Belgium as the worst performer in August, providing a return of only 0.61 per cent in local currency terms - for the same period Italy's return rose 5.84 per cent.

Then, late last week, when many were beginning to consider that Belgian debt prices had been left too far behind, the central bank announced it was raising central interest rates from 9.5 per cent to 10.5 per cent. The news sent bond prices plunging by up to two percentage points for some maturities. A wave of selling pushed the yield on 10-year bonds back up to 7.3 per cent against 7 per cent in July.

On Friday, prices continued to fall and yields to rise, widening the gap with German bund

returns to some 115 basis points as the market factored in a slide in the Belgian franc to BFR23 against the D-Mark. Some analysts believe there will be no pick-up until early November and then only if wages are frozen under the social pact to be thrashed out at the end of the month.

Belgium's problems are encapsulated in its soaring public debt, which stood at around 116 per cent to GNP last year, the highest in the OECD. Ms Jane Edwards, economist with Lehman Brothers, says the recession and the central bank's determination to maintain high rates to protect the currency's parity with the D-Mark are leading to snowballing debt, a situation where debt spirals because high debt means high interest rates which lead to more debt. She says interest payments on public debt were close to BFR800bn last year and are unlikely to fall this year or next.

Ms Edwards argues that Belgian bonds will be attractive once a wage agreement is reached. But any solution to the crisis is likely to involve lower short-term rates which will also weaken the currency, so overseas buyers would have to hedge against currency falls.

A more optimistic case is put by Bear Stearns, the US securities house, which has taken the widening spread between Belgian and German 10-year paper as a pointer to the prospective value and recommends a switch from bunds to Belgian paper.

Mr Craig Shute, an economist with Bear Stearns, claims: "Domestic considerations point to lower short-term rates by the end of the year, even if it means breaking the franc/mark tie." Mr Shute published his research shortly before last Thursday's plunge and, when the bond/Belgian bond spread was around 85 basis points.

Whether his enthusiasm is justified depends on whether Belgium is prepared to unshackle its monetary policy from that of Germany, where unification has led to relatively high inflation that has to be fought by a tight monetary policy.

As with Denmark, Belgium fears that a decoupling of monetary policy from Germany would reveal fundamental economic problems that could be ignored when the European monetary union project was strong.

But since the widening of the European exchange rate mechanism divergence margins from 2.25 per cent to 15 per cent the German link has looked increasingly spurious. Two weeks ago, a group of 14 Flemish economists called for monetary policy to be relaxed. They said that continuing to tie the Belgian franc to the D-Mark a policy pursued since 1990 - would damage industry and employment prospects and was no longer an acceptable option.

Late on Friday, speculation that the Belgian franc's tight link to the D-Mark would be dropped as well as news that the state budget deficit rose to BFR76.9bn in August left short- and long-term debt markets rudderless.

Peter John

UK GILTS

US events give food for thought

THERE HAS been a certain amount of scepticism in the UK that long-dated gilt yields - already at post-war lows - have much further to fall. But events in the US on Friday may have given the sceptics food for thought.

The publication of exceptionally poor unemployment figures sent long-bond yields to historically low levels. As Treasury dealers mulled the growing belief that a hesitant recovery means inflation will be held at bay, yields sank to below 6 per cent.

Although there is no guarantee that the UK recovery will mirror that of the US indefinitely, there has been a fairly strong correlation so far.

The implication for gilt dealers of Friday's news is that in a year from now, the UK recovery will be as cautious and non-inflationary as the US pick-up is proving to be, some two years into its recovery. Such news has to be good for gilts.

But a glance at the latest round-up of City forecasts shows that analysts are far from agreed on the future course of inflation. Forecasts for growth in the retail prices index for 1994 currently range from 2.5 per cent to as high as 6.5 per cent.

The UK government bond market appeared to enter a consolidation phase last week, with prices little changed on the week.

However, given lingering

concerns about the future course of inflation based on the short-track record of recent improvements, the big question for dealers is where will the market head next. Have long yields dropped as far as they can, or do they, as in the US, have further to go?

On Friday, yields were virtually unchanged on the week, in spite of a fairly busy week's trading.

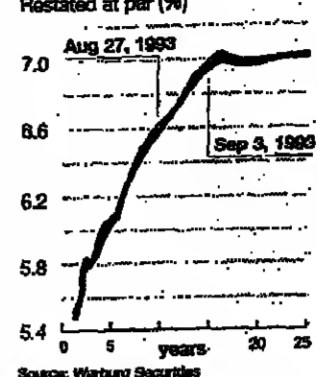
The yield on the 7% per cent Treasury bond maturing in 1998 was 6.31 per cent, compared with 6.30 per cent on the previous Friday's close. Further out, the 15-year 9 per cent bond yield closed at 7.22 per cent compared with 7.24 per cent a week earlier. The yield on the 6% per cent Treasury bond maturing 2017 was virtually unchanged at 7.23 per cent.

Although the spread of forecasts for inflation is wide, most economists do not expect the RPI, excluding mortgage interest payments, to breach the upper limit of the government's 1 per cent to 4 per cent target range in 1994. Even those who were pessimistic at the beginning of the year are revising their forecasts downwards.

"Earlier this year we were gloomier about inflation than we are now," said Mr Keith Skochee, chief economist at James Capel. "But the rebound that we were expecting from food retailers did not happen and service sector inflation

UK gilts yield

Restated at par (%)



Source: Warburg Securities

has also come down sharply."

Analysts also appear to be drawing comfort from the very apparent commitment of Mr Eddie George, the new governor of the Bank of England, to holding down inflation. Last week, Mr George told the Securities and Investment Review that it was unacceptable to accept even a little bit of inflation.

"The danger is that it accelerates in an uncontrollable way to become quite a lot of inflation," he said.

There are even suggestions that the UK's notorious attachment to inflation is being broken at a more fundamental level.

"While the current low level of inflation is largely a consequence of the recession, a low inflation psychology is developing in the UK and a policy

framework now exists to manage it. So a low inflation recovery is possible," says Mr Simon Briscoe, economist at SG Warburg Securities.

Brave words indeed. If so, gilts may yet go on to perform as well as their US counterparts. However, even those who are most bullish about prospects for inflation would perhaps like to see just a little more evidence that it has been stifled before another rally in gilts can take off.

Money supply figures from the Bank of England on Friday showed that overseas enthusiasm for gilts has been going from strength to strength.

The Bank sold a record £1.5bn of gilts to foreign investors in July, following sales of £1.1bn in June. The record July sales came in a month that saw yields drop by 75 basis points.

The August M0 figure contained little to worry the gilts market. Narrow money grew by 5.2 per cent in the year August, which was slightly lower than expectations of 5.4 per cent.

The figure, which pointed to a steady recovery in consumer spending, was anyway inflated by a big increase in the annual rate of bankers' operational deposits, which comprises a small part of M0. These are more influenced by conditions in the money markets than by economic activity.

Emma Tucker

FT/ISMA INTERNATIONAL BOND SERVICE

USA DOLLAR STRAIGHTS			Yield			Bid			Ask			Bid			Ask		
Instrument	Yield	Price	Yield	Price	Yield	Price	Yield	Price	Yield	Price	Yield	Price	Yield	Price			
10 Year Treasury	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Treasury	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Treasury	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Treasury	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Gilt	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Gilt	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Gilt	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Gilt	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Bund	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Bund	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Bund	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Bund	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year OAT	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year OAT	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year OAT	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year OAT	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year BTP	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year BTP	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year BTP	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year BTP	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year GTS	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year GTS	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year GTS	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year GTS	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
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30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
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30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
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20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
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30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
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30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			
30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
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30 Year Riksg	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00	5.94	100.00			
10 Year Riksg	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00	6.31	100.00			
15 Year Riksg	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00	7.22	100.00			
20 Year Riksg	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00	7.23	100.00			

CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

SEPTEMBER 12-14

Informal Teleworking '93: Europe and North America Working Together
The National Informal Teleworking Association (NITA) together with Advertising Age International will present a conference introducing senior North American and European executives from the informal, teleworking and marketing industries to discuss the future of teleworking.
Contact: Vivian Wallace, Lippin Wallace 071 630 5520

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 13

Critical Technologies for Europe: The 4th European Community Framework Programme for Research and Development
Covered by The RITA and PREST (Programme of Policy Research in Engineering Science and Technology). Enquiries: RITA Conference, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LB. Tel: 071 887 5700; Fax: 071 957 5710

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 13/14

Unit Trust Administration
A complete review of Unit Trust Administration and Operations including background, pricing and dealing, distribution, reporting, regulation and certification. Ideal for supervisors, staff and managers needing a detailed review. Course repeated regularly.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 13/15

Investment Markets Briefing
Complete briefing on stockmarkets, bond markets, futures and options, institutional and portfolio investment, FT IT executives, accountants, solicitors, trustees and other executives working in or with securities companies, but lacking detailed knowledge.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 14

The Future of European Securities Trading
Major conference to examine the issues arising from the integration of European Securities Markets. Speakers include: Chairman of the London, Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Luxembourg Stock Exchanges; and senior representatives from Mercury Asset Management and Lombard Odier.
Contact: Alison Elger, Dow Jones Telecity Tel: 071 532 9332 Fax: 071 353 2791

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 14

UK Cable, Telephony and Finance
In-depth conference on opportunities, competitive factors, economics and marketing in the UK cable and telephony industry. Aim to be covered: Leverage in finance build, system consolidation, telecoms liberalisation, residential and business telephony.
Contact: Kagan World Media, Ltd. Tel: 071-371 8880 Fax: 071-371 8715

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 15

European Media & Communications: Deals and Finance
A major conference examining the financial trends and deal structure fueling the growth in Europe's media, entertainment and communications industries. Covering: Finance across Europe, public markets, M&A structures, financing start-ups and new media technologies.
Contact: Kagan World Media, Ltd. Tel: 071-371 8880 Fax: 071-371 8715

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 15

Foreign Exchange
Provides an excellent and comprehensive understanding as to how foreign exchange markets work, the use and calculation involved, etc. Course repeated in various European locations.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 17

Marketing & Sponsoring Minority Sports
A one day practical briefing on what to look for, what price to pay and how to package and build up the venture. Subjects: rights ownership, sports and media, interview techniques and the incidence of exploitable TV.
Contact: Sport Solutions, PO Box 72, Bingham T91 9 7SS Fax: (London) 071 490 8788

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 20

Pay and Performance 1993/94
First of CBI/Emas & Young seminar (12 presentations throughout UK to follow) presenting details of latest labour market costs and development supported by case studies.
Contact: Karen Acton CBI Conferences Tel: 071 379 7400 Fax: 071 497 3646

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 12

Serving the Customer: Is Information Technology a Bridge or a Barrier?
One day interactive workshop exploring the concept of 'Integrated Customer Care' and the challenges it presents for Marketing and Information Technology Managers/Directors.
Cost: £250.00 + VAT per delegate
Enquiries: Avenel Consultancy Services Ltd Tel: 081 947 8680 Fax: 081 947 8678

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 22

Bonds and Fixed Interest Markets - An Overview
Provides a comprehensive overview of the major bond and fixed interest markets, their instruments and workings.
Course repeated in Germany, Luxembourg etc.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 22

Overseas Property Seminar
Ernst & Young's afternoon seminar on the tax considerations of owning and purchasing overseas property. At Ernst & Young's office in London ECA.
Contact: Sue Griffiths ERNST & YOUNG Tel: 071 931 2618

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 23

Information Technology for Utilities
Showing Utilities how to link IT across all business sectors to improve efficiency and performance whilst satisfying staff, shareholders and customers.
Speakers from: Thames Water, National Power, SWEB, Seven Trans, Massey, IBM, National Utilities.
ICOM Conferences: 0226 29972

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 23-26

The Guardian Education & Jobs Fair
The UK's most definitive careers and education show including a comprehensive seminars programme. Over 140 universities and higher education colleges will be exhibiting and providing a large range of courses at all levels.
Enquiries: Paul Foster - Centre Exhibitions Tel: 021 780 4141

BIRMINGHAM

SEPTEMBER 27-30

FIRE '93
The national conference and exhibition for the whole fire protection profession. The Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow.
For free exhibition admission tickets contact: Jane Macdonald-Coe, FMI International Publications Ltd. Tel: (0737) 768611 Fax: (0737) 761685

GLASGOW

SEPTEMBER 27

Corporate Actions
A detailed review of Corporate Actions including Rights, Scrips, conversions, interests and dividend payments, etc. Essential for all those working with securities and investments.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 27

Regulation and Compliance: The SFA Rules
A complete review of all SFA rules for all those responsible, whether Compliance Officer, or a Director, Senior or Broker responsible for Regulatory and Compliance approach. Includes Conduct of Business, Client money etc, etc.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 27

Working for your Health
CBI/BUPA Conference considers the benefits and challenges for companies in making steps to improve employee health. Rt Hon Virginia Bottomley will outline the Government's approach to health in the workplace.
Contact: Nicky Martin CBI Conferences Tel: 071 379 7400 Fax: 071 497 3646

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 28-29

FURNACES '93
Exhibition and Conference. The event for thermal processing specialists. St. John's Swallow Hotel, Solihull, West Midlands, England.
For free exhibition admission tickets contact: Lorrie Rogers, FMI International Publications Ltd. Tel: (0737) 768611 Fax: (0737) 761685

SOLIHULL

SEPTEMBER 28/29

Global Custody
A practical overview of the many options involved in Global Custody including Stock Borrowing and Lending. Essential for all those working with securities and investments.
Contact: Investment Education plc Tel: 061-833 9636 Fax: 061-834 8020

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 29

CROYDON - The Future
Major Conference on economic development. Ashcroft Theatre, Fairfield Halls, Croydon. Speakers on transport, telecommunications, urban design including: Sir John Harvey-Jones, Ron Rishman Chapman, Stuart Lyons.
Conference Fee: £55.00
Tel: 081-760 5729 Fax: 081-760 5635

CROYDON

SEPTEMBER 29 & 30

Managing Business Regulation Effectively
A two-day conference for directors and senior managers, focussing on risks associated with various company compliance issues and how to manage them successfully. Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Chairman of the Financial Law Panel.
Contact: Patricia Sheldon, Gec Conferences Tel: 071 538 5386 Fax: 071 538 8623

LONDON

SEPT 29/30 & OCT 1

The Health of Nations 1993
Health of Nations: Demand, Cost & Efficiency on policy issues and impact on providers, suppliers and investors. James Watson, Rolf Kohn and Lady Chamberlain. A two-day conference sponsored by The Wall Street Journal Europe, medical, pharmaceutical, health care bodies, consultants and banks.
Information: Cloydon Ltd Tel: 0225-442903

EDINBURGH

SEPT 30 & DEC 17

Performance - Organisational Benchmarking & Improvement
A practical one-day seminar/workshop, led by the authors of the Financial Times Business Series book on Benchmarking.
Contact: Sull Benfield, Services Ltd. Tel: 0225-442903

BIRMINGHAM & LONDON

OCTOBER

Invest in your evenings
London Business School's long-established finance evening programmes for experienced managers and finance professionals start in October. The Corporate Finance and Investment Management programmes require attendance on one evening per week and the Masters Degree in Finance requires two years of part-time study.
For details, call Janet Dobson on 071-262 5050 or fax 071-724 3317

LONDON

OCTOBER 4-5 & 6-7

Total Quality Management The Right Way to Manage
William E Conway
Bill Conway, the first Western CEO to implement the Deming philosophy in the West, will present his Right Way To Manage Seminar. People of all levels can learn from his knowledge and rare philosophy into practice.
Mike Callaghan & Associates Ltd. Tel: (0621) 858058 Fax: (0621) 850972

BIRMINGHAM

OCTOBER 4-7

FT - City Course
The objective of the course is to provide an understanding of all aspects of the operation of the City and the factors that make it a pre-eminent financial and trading centre.
Enquiries: Financial Times Tel: 071-814 9770 Fax: 071-873 3975/3969

LONDON

OCTOBER 5

Business Process Management
86 Park Lane, Mayfair, London
Update yourself with this radical approach to enhancing operational competence and so improving business performance.
Contact: Evans Morris, CIMA Mastercourses Tel: 071 917 9244 Fax: 071 580 6991

LONDON

OCTOBER 5-6

The Freightconnection Conference & Exhibition '93
A conference examining transport reform and opportunities affecting road & rail/freight movements in Europe. Covering combined transport, road charging, satellite navigation, channel tunnel developments. Speakers include: Roger Freeman MP, Sir Alexander Morton, Graham Dunlop.
Contact: John Oles, The Waterford Partnership. Tel: 071 730 0430 Fax: 071 730 0460

MANCHESTER

OCTOBER 6

The Role of the Company Secretary
Mountbatten Hotel, Covent Garden, London
Are you fulfilling your statutory obligations? This course will give you practical up-to-date knowledge of current companies legislation.
Contact: Evans Morris, CIMA Mastercourses Tel: 071 917 9244 Fax: 071 580 6991

LONDON

OCTOBER 6/7

Introduction to Options Course - Parts 1 & 2
Day 1: Basic Terminology, Option Pricing, Trading & Hedging Strategies; Day 2: Volatility, Advanced Trading Strategies, Portfolio Management.
Venue: Cambridge Science Park, CAMBRIDGE, CB3 455 (1 day only), 1993 (both days)
Contact: Kathy Page, Brady Financial Seminars Tel: (0223) 423250

CAMBRIDGE

OCTOBER 11

Corporation Tax Update
Provided: Trade Year, Manchester.
Your company pays tax - what do you know about it? This course is designed for the non-specialist who requires a working knowledge of the main features of UK taxation.
Contact: Evans Morris, CIMA Mastercourses Tel: 071 917 9244 Fax: 071 580 6991

LONDON

OCTOBER 11-13

TRANSFORM - The Systematic Approach to Managing Change
This new course, developed by Robert Gilbreath, world leader in change management, is aimed at executives who realise that success today is dependent on having practical methods and techniques for leading change.
Profound Change Management Tel: 081 948 8333 Fax: 081 946 8293

LONDON

OCTOBER 11 & 12

Managing the Future
The Management Charter Initiative's (MCI) fifth National Conference will address the practical issues faced by managers as they fight their way out of recession, and look at the skills and qualities that they will need to help their organisations survive and prosper.
Tel: 071-872 9000 Fax: 071-872 9099

LIVERPOOL

OCTOBER 11-14

Using Interest Rate Derivatives in Trading and Managing Risk
London Business School Financial Software's comprehensive seminar, more than 50% of which is devoted to practical small group workshops. Ability to select the days you would like to attend.
Contact: Antony Webb Tel: 0223 825663

LONDON

OCTOBER 12

Selling Your Business to Management
Scientific Crown Hotel, Victoria, London
Guidance through all aspects of management buy outs, including the benefits and pitfalls of an MBO approach to divestment.
Contact: Evans Morris, CIMA Mastercourses Tel: 071-917 9244 Fax: 071 580 6991

LONDON

OCTOBER 13

Banking on Change
International Seminar for Banks in the 1990s. The first of a series of 8 breakfast presentations, one a month, delivered by Christopher Johnson, former Chairman of the Bank of England and Chief Executive of Lloyds Bank. They are designed for Senior Bank Managers. Lafferty Training.
Contact: John Whitley - Lafferty Training Tel: 071 782 0595

LONDON

OCTOBER 13

New US Trade, Tax & Environmental Regulations: Their Impact on Corporate Profit
From Wash, D.C., US Trade Representatives will present the Clinton Administration's trade & tariff policies; plus a focus on the new anti-trust laws, its impact on multinational corporations and environmental law impact on insurance and construction. Lunch speaker: Frederick Forsyth, The Stanford Bridge Group, supported by Bank of America & B.A.C.C.
Contact: Jo Ellis Tel: 0279 506702

LONDON

OCTOBER 14

City of London Derivatives Conference
To be opened by Dr Henry Kaufman this City of London conference covers the market, their regulation, maximising their benefits and controlling the risks. Central Banking and The Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation, Swiss Bank Corp. Arthur Andersen and PricewaterhouseCoopers.
Information: Marc Lee, City of London Tel: 0225-465444 Fax: 0225-442903

LONDON

OCTOBER 14

How To Succeed as a Supplier
This one-day conference will address the key issues involved in becoming a successful supplier including competitive tendering, as structural terms, quality standards and debt collection.
Enquiries: Director Conferences Tel: 071 730 0022

LONDON

OCTOBER 14-15

Business Performance Measurement: Identifying and managing the drivers of future profitability
A major two-day international management conference on how and why organisations are broadening their performance measurement systems to include drivers of future value such as quality, customer service and human capital.
Contact: Business Intelligence Tel: 081-544 1830 Fax: 081-544 9020

LONDON

OCTOBER 18-19

COMEX '93
A three track Mobile Communications International Conference, covering Cellular for the Mass Market, Mobile Data Developments, Wireless Local Loop. Speakers include: Jim Norton, Radiocommunications Agency, Thomas Wheeler, Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association USA, Alex Arcus, Hong Kong Telecommunications.
Contact: Richard Huxley, The Federation of Communications Services Tel: 081-778 5656 Fax: 081-778 8402

LONDON

OCTOBER 18-22

New Cards Strategies for Banks and Retailers
Midland House, former Chief Executive of First Financial Services and a leading consultant to the Cards industry, leads the exciting programme focusing on recent developments, particularly with Loyalty Cards and Affinity Cards.
Contact: John Whitley - Lafferty Training Tel: 071 782 0595 Fax: 071 782 0595

LONDON

OCTOBER 19-21

Processing and Packaging Machinery Association: PMA Show
An exhibition dedicated entirely to machinery for those who process and package food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, chemicals, beverages, DIY goods etc. Over 400 major machinery manufacturers exhibiting. MANY NEW MACHINES ON SHOW.
Tickets from Bill Lake Tel: 081-681 8226 Fax: 081-681 1641

TELFORD UK

OCTOBER 20-21

Know Your Competitors
Competitor Intelligence & Analysis inc. Benchmarking.
A practical two day seminar/workshop from the UK's No. 1 specialists. Practical case exercises, successful case studies. Guest speaker who is head of a major company's intelligence unit.
Contact: Patricia Dornan, EMP Intelligence Service Tel: 071-497-5665 Fax: 071-497-5640

LONDON

OCTOBER 25

Downsizing IT: The Management Challenge
A one-day management conference presenting a balanced view of the major factors to be taken into account when seriously considering, planning or implementing a downsizing strategy.
Contact: Business Intelligence Tel: 081-544 1830 Fax: 081-544 9020

LONDON

OCTOBER 25 & 26

Acquiring and Valuing in Germany
The M&A market in Germany has never favoured the buyer more than at present. This course is designed for those wishing to profit from these developments and who want to gain the skills to make successful acquisitions in Germany.
For further details contact: Acquisitions Monthly Tel: 071 823 8740 Fax: 071 581 4331

LONDON

NOVEMBER 1 & 2

Restructuring and Refinancing - Emerging from the Recession
Businesses which have survived the recession must now consider both their short and long term strategies. This workshop will equip you with the skills and information necessary to gain a competitive advantage in the post recession market.
For further details contact: Acquisitions Monthly Tel: 071 823 8740 Fax: 071 581 4331

LONDON

NOVEMBER 2-3

"Recognition International '93: Conference and Exhibition
Novotel London, Hammersmith
Europe's largest exhibition devoted to Recognition Technology for Data Entry, Document Management and Publishing. Virtual Reality International '94: Conference and Exhibition, 1-2 February 1994, Novotel London, Hammersmith. Europe's premier trade event for VR developers, operators and investors. Further details from Meckler Tel: +44 71 976 0405 Fax: +44 71 976 0506

LONDON

NOVEMBER 8

Successful Outsourcing: The Challenge for IT
This one-day conference is specifically designed to help senior IT and business managers assess the potential value of outsourcing to their organisations and to identify the factors that contribute to the successful selection and management of such arrangements.
Contact: Business Intelligence Tel: 081-544 1830 Fax: 081-544 9020

LONDON

NOVEMBER 11-12

Hotel Investment and Tourism Development in Central and Eastern Europe
Investment opportunities in 13 countries - and how to finance them. Free essential information on investment conditions in each country. The substantial one-stop event for established investors and those exploring the market.
Development Journal/Touche Ross Tel: 071 242 1280 or Tel: 0223 315319 Fax: 0223 355679

LONDON

NOVEMBER 14-16

CBI National Conference
Sessions include - UK Economy, Europe, World Trade, Government/Industry partnership, Training and Employment. Speakers include: Kenneth Clarke, James Delort, Michael Heseltine and John Smith. Contact Special Events department CBI Tel: 071 379 7400 Fax: 071 497 3646

HARROGATE

NOVEMBER 15

Auditing the Regulated Sectors
Coping with the New Regulations. New statutory duties for auditors of all business regulated by FSA, Building Societies Act and Friendly Societies Act mean changes in working practices and added potential liabilities. CPD 6 hours. CPE 8 points.
Contact: Linda McKay, IBC Tel: 071 637 4383 Fax: 071 631 3214

LONDON

NOVEMBER 16-17

BPR '93: The 1st annual conference and exhibition on Business Process Re-engineering
Two-day conferences outlining the opportunities provided by adding a process view of your business. Senior representatives from leading companies in the US & UK outline how business re-engineering has enabled them to achieve major improvements in corporate performance.
Contact: Business Intelligence Tel: 081-544 1830 Fax: 081-544 9020

LONDON

NOVEMBER 22 & 23

The Fifth FT Petrochemical Conference
The aim of this year's meeting is to provide a high-level forum to discuss the challenges currently facing the petrochemical industry and catalytic developments in key markets.
Enquiries: Financial Times Tel: 071-814 9770 Fax: 071-873 3975/3969

LONDON

NOVEMBER 22

The Economics of Rail Privatisation
The conference will examine the opportunities and pitfalls in passenger services franchising, the new leasing market and management of the track infrastructure.
Enquiries: Financial Times Tel: 071-814 9770 Fax: 071-873 3975/3969

LONDON

NOVEMBER 29

Money Laundering
How do you prevent the laundering of dirty money - how do you detect it and to whom do you report it? Serious penalties for failure. Compliance Surgery offers chance to have your own questions answered. CPD 4 hours.
Contact: Ashia Peters, IBC Tel: 071 637 4383 Fax: 071 631 3214

LONDON

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 2

Business in Britain Exhibition and Conference
A 200 stand exhibition and 75 seminar business managers of companies with up to £25 million turnover. Provides a forum for business advisers and managers planning for and seeking expansion. Opens on Budget Day.
Contact: Charles Horner Tel: 081-673 7766

LONDON

NOVEMBER 30

Insider Dealing
Insider Dealing now seriously considered a criminal offence and increasing resources will be devoted to the discovery and punishment of offenders. You must have confidence that your existing compliance procedures are adequate and up to date.
CPD 5.5 hours.
Contact: Ashia Peters, IBC Tel: 071 637 4383 Fax: 071 631 3214

LONDON

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 1

The UK Conference on Customer Service Management
This conference will tackle the major issues facing organisations striving for quality and service excellence. Speakers include the Chief Executives of DHL, Digital, Kwik

In the bomb-blasted City of London, the worst may be over for reinsurers PAGE II

REINSURANCE

Monday September 6 1993

Natural disasters have been happening more frequently than in the past PAGE III

New capital is flowing into the reinsurance industry, writes Richard Lapper. But as the markets absorb the cost of a series of recent largescale disasters, they are under continued pressure to raise premiums and to limit the scope of cover

Reaping the whirlwinds

AS REINSURERS MEET in Monte Carlo today for their annual rendezvous, investors are showing an almost feverish interest in their industry.

Yet in spite of the flow of new capital into the catastrophe market in Bermuda and to a lesser extent in London, international markets are still short of capacity, following the increase in both the number and scale of catastrophe losses in recent years.

Bermuda has been the biggest beneficiary of the surge in investor interest, with more than half a dozen new companies, specialising in catastrophe reinsurance, choosing to base themselves on the island in recent months. The biggest new venture is a company, called Partner Reinsurance, launched a week ago by Swiss Re, the world's second biggest reinsurer, John Head, the US investor, and other institutional investors.

The three original shareholders have invested \$250m and intend to raise a further \$500m from US, European and Japanese equity markets. Mr Walter Klotz, a director of Swiss Re, said the aim of the project was to "generate as much new capacity as possible".

Earlier this summer investors - ranging from insurers and reinsurers such as American International Group, General Re and USF & G, brokers such as Johnson & Higgins and financial houses such as Gold-

man Sachs - announced backing for four separate ventures with a combined capital of more than \$1bn.

The biggest of these - Tempest Reinsurance - is expected to have up to \$500m in capital, while International Property Catastrophe Reinsurance Co, backed by AIG and others, is capitalised at \$300m. In another move Mid-Ocean, a venture started by Marsh McLennan and JP Morgan last year with capital of \$350m, raised a further \$250m through an initial public offering in New York. Separately it emerged in August that both SCOR, the French reinsurer, and Centre Re, now controlled by Switzerland's Zurich Insurance, are both considering new Bermuda-based catastrophe reinsurance subsidiaries.

In London, two US insurance companies have announced plans to launch new subsidiaries, dedicated to the catastrophe reinsurance market, while Benfield Group, a fast growing reinsurance broker, is expected to launch a new reinsurance company in the autumn with about \$50m in capital, while Australian investors are preparing to inject A\$300m into a new Sydney-based facility.

This influx of capital will ease capacity shortages but it is unlikely to be sufficient to depress rates, which have risen strongly since 1989 following a series of multi-billion pound

insurance losses. The impact of hurricane Andrew last year, which left losses of more than \$15.5bn and was the biggest ever US catastrophe loss, underlined the increasing scale of catastrophes in recent years.

Mr Alan Badanes, who specialises in insurance mergers and acquisitions with Chase Manhattan, says that even after the most recent announcements in Bermuda, the amount of new money is still dwarfed by the volume of capital which has left the industry in recent years. "Any way you look at it there is a big hole to fill, in terms of raw supply and demand this means prices should hold up for the next few years," says Mr Badanes.

In London, underwriters and brokers expect the extra capacity will allow them to stabilise covers and rates at present levels. They stress that at least as far as the 1994 renewal season is concerned most Bermudian

underwriters are following the rates set by underwriters in London.

Mr Richard Keeling, underwriter with Murray Lawrence syndicate 382, and a leader of reinsurance business in London, says that some buyers of catastrophe covers, from Australia, for example, could even face rate increases. But he hopes that increases will be avoided elsewhere. "With a bit of luck we can stabilise the catastrophe product."

Mr Keeling is expecting the most substantial rate increases in the market for risk excess covers, which cover the peak exposures of a ceding company. Rates in the risk excess market vary by as much as 50 per cent. "The market has got to a point where it needs to be repricing the product."

The "hardening" is likely to be as pronounced in the proportional market - where reinsurers assume a set percentage of exposures in return for the

same percentage of original premium less a ceding commission. Europe's highest reinsurers are still not satisfied that rates have been increased to adequate levels. Last year the withdrawal of Munich Re and some of its European rivals from some markets increased capacity shortages and spurred further rate increases.

Munich Re excluded some catastrophe risks from policies in the hurricane-prone Caribbean, for example, and refused to cover terrorism in policies sold to UK insurers, following the IRA bomb attacks of April 1992. This latter move caused confusion in the UK industry and, in spite of the establishment of a new government-backed reinsurer, Pool Re, many of the country's businesses are now not protected from terrorist incidents.

Dr Fedor Nierhaus, a management board member at Munich Re, says that original rates for earthquakes and

storms are still too low in almost all markets and that commercial lines business is still heavily underpriced, hinting that further tightening could be on the way. "We have taken the view that we can't follow these inadequate original rates any longer. We can only agree a separate reinsurance price. If we cannot get an adequate price we must reduce coverage," he says.

Reinsurers are likely to press for the introduction of loss participation clauses and lower commissions on proportional business. Reinsurers could also insist on new restrictions to the wordings of proportional treaties, including caps on catastrophe exposures.

Caps have been introduced in most American proportional treaties over the last 12 months, according to Standard & Poor's, the US rating agency. Dr Nierhaus says Munich Re intends to press for similar changes elsewhere and says

that reinsurers will be unable to give "unlimited cover for each loss event". The company will "pursue this limitation. It is a matter of fundamental importance," he adds.

Underwriters in London now expect other European reinsurers to follow suit, a development which could leave some European insurers with problems. "This is very serious especially for French and German insurers who have no idea about the size of their exposures," said a Lloyd's underwriter. These companies will come under more pressure from their reinsurers to provide more detailed information to their reinsurers detailing their exposures to storm and other catastrophe risks.

One other implication is that hard pressed and financially weak direct insurers may be unable to use proportional treaties to bolster their capital. The proportional market could also see some other changes with European underwriters of liability and motor business refusing to offer unlimited cover except where it is a legal requirement to do so.

A leading London broker says that reinsurers successfully pushed through these changes during the Australian renewal season at the beginning of July, although they were less successful in the South African market.

Overall, though, current developments seem likely to reinforce the recent trend in the market for reinsurers to carry a greater proportion of exposure on their own books, rather than syndicating them widely with dozens of reinsurers sharing a small part of each contract. "The flight to capital and the flight to quality will continue," says Mr Badanes. "Rather than 70 different reinsurers all taking small lines on one reinsurance contract, there will be fewer but larger companies and larger lines."

Mr Michael Palm, executive vice-president of Centre Re, believes "a smaller market made up of larger players" is emerging. "Pricing and terms will be controlled by the large and well capitalised companies," he adds.



Fighting a forest fire in California in August 1992

IN THIS SURVEY

City developers show post-bombing confidence; Europeans pay for the 1980sPAGE II

US reinsurers say hurricane Andrew could have been much worse; global warming makes insurers sweatPAGE III

As central control crumbles in Latin America and the ex-Soviet bloc, openings arise for private operators; the delayed price of "forgotten" pollutantsPAGE IV

Financial products still sell despite tighter rules; profile of Centre Re's unorthodox founding duo; brokers take on an advisory rolePAGE V

A rethink in life reinsurance; why sunny Bermuda is sucking in investors' cashPAGE VI

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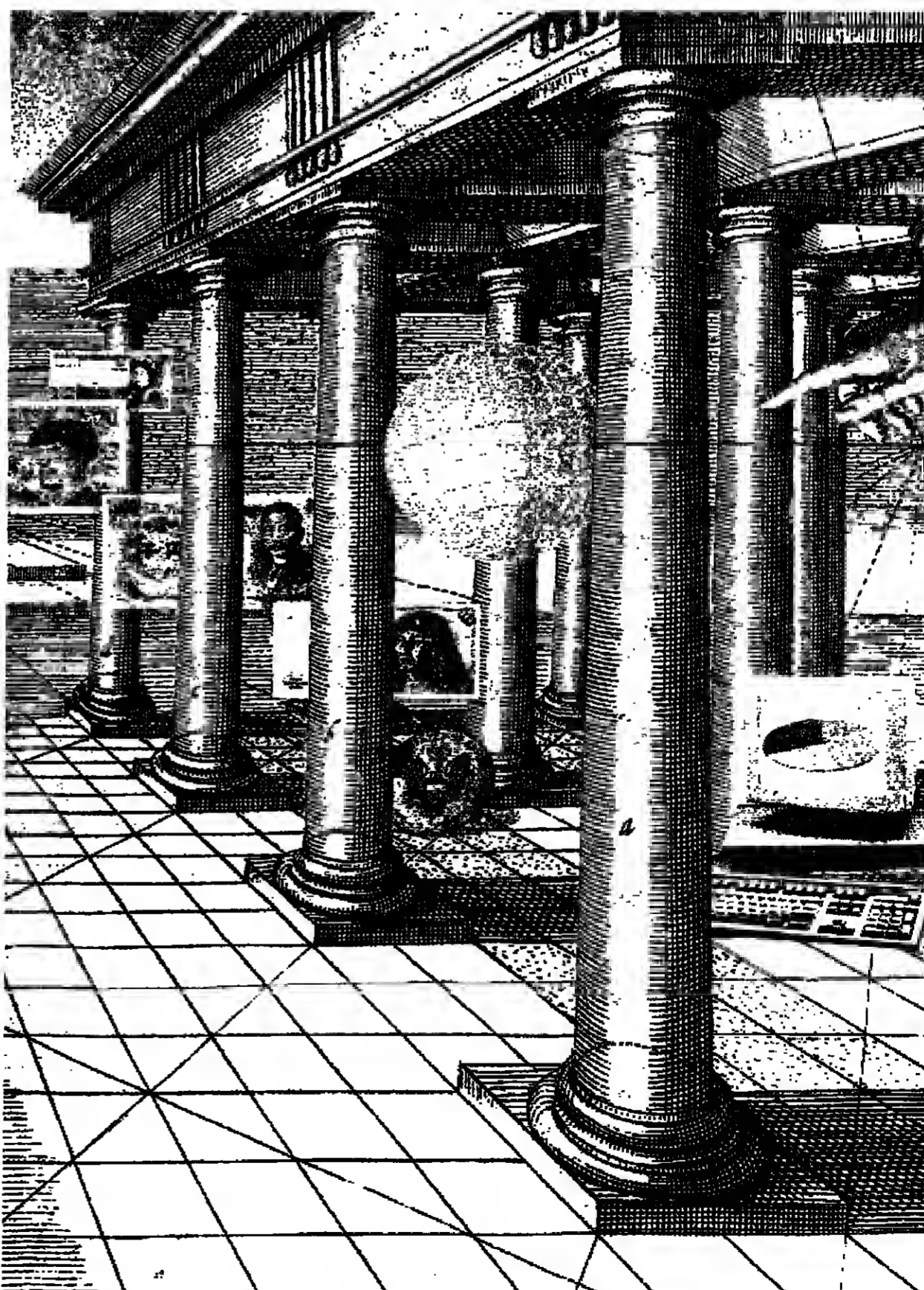
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REINSURANCE II

London's outlook is not as bad as it seems, says Richard Lapper

Recovery in the ruins

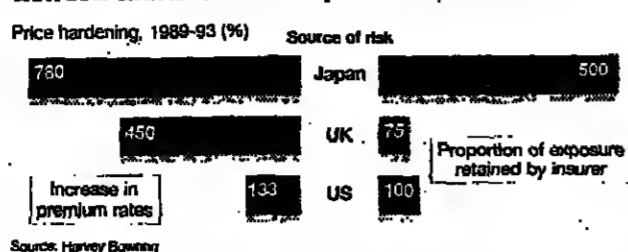
AMID the bomb debris and "To Let" signs littering Fenchurch and Leadenhall Street it is only too easy to form the impression that London's insurance market is in terminal decline.

Indeed in the spring of this year news of reinsurance company withdrawals and a continual stream of disaster and scandal at the Lloyd's markets combined to create a mood of near despair among professionals about the fortunes of the market.

Six months later the picture is a good deal brighter. Reinsurance rates are still rising, the weather in the Caribbean and Europe has - at least until the end of August - been kinder to reinsurers, and the market has been buoyed by higher than expected investor interest in new reinsurance ventures both at Lloyd's and in the company market.

London's problems began when a series of catastrophe losses squeezed between the two European storms of October 1987 and January 1990 hit

London market catastrophe reinsurance



the highly specialist market for retrocessional cover. At a time when the market was introducing new technology to speed up claims payments, the combination of both the number and scale of the losses eventually overwhelmed lead underwriters backed by Lloyd's agencies such as Gooda Walker, Feltrim, Devonshire, Rose Thompson Young and Bromley.

Syndicates such as 290 and 540/42 made losses in 1989 and 1990 which exceeded their total capacity by more than 200 per cent, leaving their Names with unsustainable losses and a tangle of litigation. Losses at

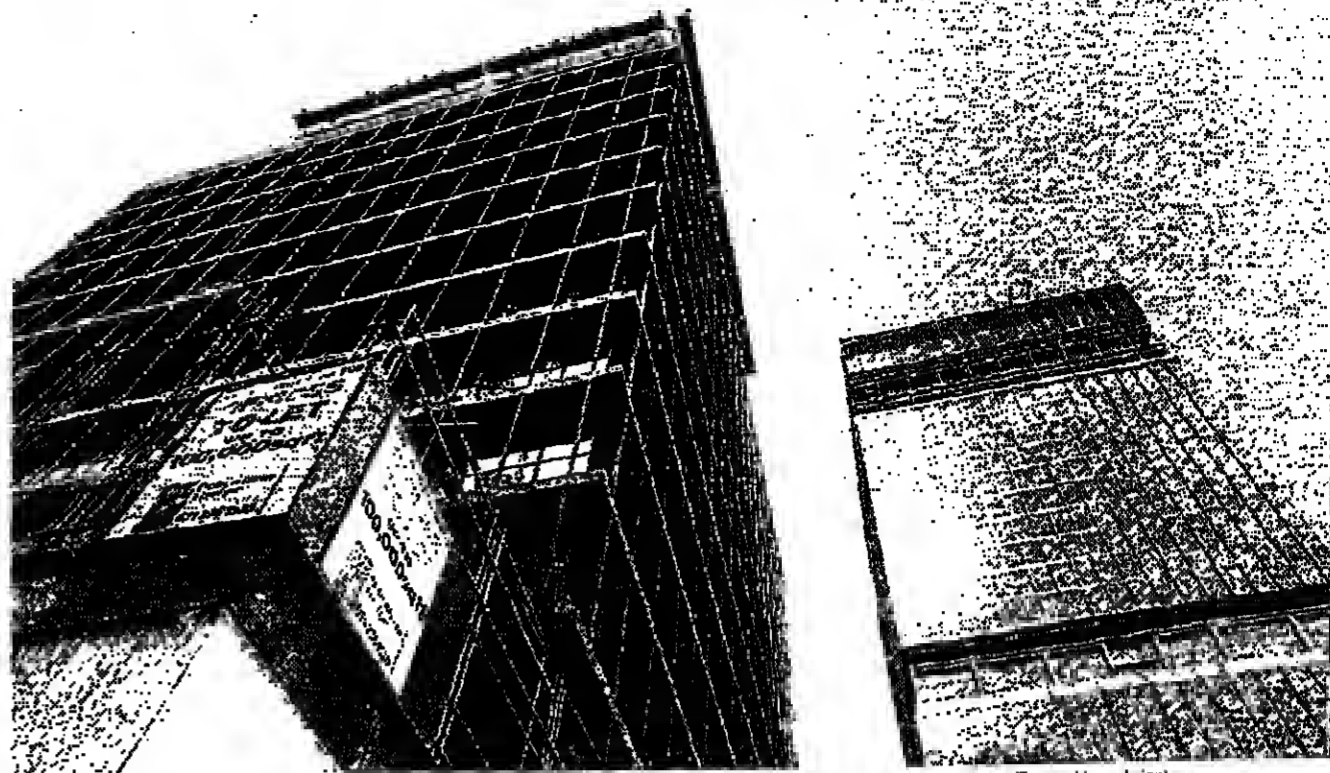
Gooda Walker's seven syndicates - three of which were regarded as leaders in the "spiral" market - are expected to exceed £1bn, about a sixth of Lloyd's total losses in the last five years. Even underwriters such as Mr David King, whose syndicate 745 was popular among professionals, has been driven out of business by the losses.

The number of syndicates fell from just over 400 in 1990 to 223 in 1993, with a fall to fewer than 200 forecast for 1994. Syndicates which had occupied four of the Lloyd's building's trading floors in 1989

were accommodated on only two floors this year.

London-based reinsurance companies were hit in less spectacular fashion but in some cases the damage was sufficient to force withdrawals from the market. Mercantile & General Re, the subsidiary of the Prudential Corporation, was so badly affected by claims from the Piper Alpha oil rig explosion in July 1988 that it first markedly reduced its exposure to general reinsurance business, and then in 1993 announced its decision to concentrate on life reinsurance.

A second wave of losses in 1991 and 1992, culminating in hurricane Andrew - the US's biggest ever catastrophe loss - damaged a number of companies specialising in direct reinsurance, leading earlier this year to the decision by market leaders such as English & American, Norwich Winterthur (a joint venture backed by Norwich Union, Winterthur and Chiyoda of Japan) and NRG, the subsidiary of the Nether-



Battered but unbowed: City of London developers seek new beginnings in the wake of the IRA bombs (Picture: Trevor Humphries)

lands' biggest insurance company, Internationale Nederlande Groep, to leave the market.

Mr Willem Dikland, chief executive of NRG, explained that reinsurance did not offer "a sufficient return on capital. Catastrophes are getting bigger. You cannot get any retrocession (reinsurance of reinsurance) protection, and original rates, especially in France and Germany, are totally inadequate."

At least a dozen companies, some of whom such as Chancellor had so extensive involvement in the reinsurance and retrocession markets, have gone into liquidation. More generally the scale of losses and obvious volatility of the market led to the withdrawal of companies such as Royal Re, the subsidiary of Royal Insurance.

Moreover, the problems of many Lloyd's syndicates and smaller reinsurance companies have heightened fears about reinsurance security. Increasingly brokers have shied away from placing business with reinsurers who have less than £50m in capital.

At the same time the greater preparedness of brokers to place business directly with large European companies in their home offices has also weakened London's position. And stung by heavy losses themselves many European companies have become much

more concerned to exercise more direct control over the business they write.

In a significant development in June Munich Re announced that it was downgrading its London office. A notice to brokers issued on 30 June said that the company's previous policy in which international treaty business had been underwritten in London "had led to accumulations which have to be more tightly and centrally controlled". In future international treaties would be underwritten either in the

there have been a number of new investments.

● NAC Re, the eighth largest US reinsurance company, injected \$50m into a London reinsurance subsidiary in June, after recruiting Mr Charles Catt from NWR to head up the office.

● Liberty Mutual, a Boston-based insurer, also announced in June that it intends to invest \$50m in its London market subsidiary. The investment increased paid-up capital of the company from £15m to £100m. Liberty had earlier recruited Mr Dick Hazell, the former deputy chairman of Lloyd's of London, as the chairman of its London subsidiary.

● Mr David Holmes, of the London Insurance and Reinsurance Market Association (LIRMA), says his organisation, which represents the London reinsurance community, has received a number of other inquiries especially from US companies.

● In August Eagle Star, the insurance subsidiary of BAT Industries, announced it was converting its London market division into a fully fledged marine and reinsurance company, with a dedicated capital of £125m.

● In August it also emerged that the Benfield Group, a broker, which specialises in high level excess of loss market, was intended to form a new reinsurance company, with paid-up capital of some £50m.

● There has also been higher than expected investor interest among UK and US financial institutions in the efforts of Lloyd's of London to attract corporate capital to its market. At least some of this capital - which could amount to £500m according to some early indications - will be channelled into the reinsurance market.

Sentiment was also boosted in July by the government's decision to allow companies to establish tax free catastrophe reserves for the first time. The changes were outlined in consultation documents issued by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Inland Revenue and published in July.

Even so investor interest in London is dwarfed by recent developments in the Bermuda marketplace, where more than \$1bn in fresh capital was pledged in the summer. At present underwriters of the new Bermudian companies are currently content to underwrite so-called "following" lines on policies whose price, terms and conditions are decided by "lead" underwriters in London.

Yet as their confidence grows the new Bermudian companies may soon start to seek to lead business themselves, posing a potentially serious competitive threat. The London market will need to consolidate its recent recovery if it is to defend its position successfully.

Europeans foot the bill for the 1980s, writes Trevor Petch

Man-made hurricanes

THE early 1990s have witnessed the culmination of a series of adverse trends in Europe's primary insurance industry which had their roots in the dynamic financial markets and striving for international expansion in the mid-1980s.

In 1985, non-life reinsurers were publicly expressing anxiety mainly about US liability business. By 1987, other concerns were coming more to the fore. Munich Re, for example, noted "the far-reaching consequences" of retention of a greater share of risk both by commercial insureds and insurers.

Netherlands Reinsurance Group (NRG) commented that the resulting shift of emphasis towards catastrophe cover would lead to "increasingly unbalanced" reinsurance portfolios and even greater volatility of results, which could only

be evened out if "an adequate price is charged".

At the same time, Swiss Re was observing "the first effects of the EC 1992 project" in the shape of intensified competition, particularly for industrial risks. This was precisely the area of business "which has repeatedly brought unsatisfactory results for years". Munich Re, meanwhile, had for years been criticising "structural deficiencies" in the European industrial fire market.

By 1988-89, Swiss Re was expressing concern over possible accumulations of risk generated by restructuring of the primary insurance market, as well as criticising "blatant" underpricing in some areas.

The 1990 winter storms in Europe prompted it to call for "fair distribution" of catastrophe losses between reinsurer, insurer and policyholder.

Swiss Re is now addressing

the twin problems of inadequate underlying property rates and instability in prediction of natural catastrophe losses. At the end of August, it announced that it planned to invest \$100m and to take a leading technical role in Partner Re, a new specialist catastrophe reinsurer based in Bermuda.

"Industrial fire and property has been extremely bad also on a per risk basis, especially in France and Germany," says general manager Walter Kiehl, whose company is "trying very hard - I can't put it otherwise - to pressure our clients into doing something about it".

"We are assisted in this by the prohibition of cross-subsidising of personal and commercial lines," he adds. But he sees a potential danger in the impending liberalisation of all European Community markets.

"All our experience of markets which liberalise indicates that rates tend not to go up," he comments.

Reinsurers can either reduce their support or tighten conditions, but in Mr Kiehl's view some restructuring of the business itself is necessary. For example, in continental Europe there has been a tendency not to encourage industrial clients to take large deductibles, which are sometimes so low as to be "quite ridiculous". He attributes this largely to distribution networks focused on premium volume.

Each part of the business, he says, must be examined on a stand-alone basis so that no client segment or class of business subsidises another. The problem with a "whole account" view was that it made it impossible to set funds aside for very risky business.

"If the original business cannot be cured, an unhooking of the reinsurance terms of trade

from the original terms of trade is unavoidable," he concludes.

"Especially in areas of high risk, you have to have an absolute level of control," comments John Dowling, managing director of Eagle Star Re, one of few remaining providers of significant proportional capacity in London.

Last year, with numbers of reinsurers withdrawing or heavily restricting operations, the bargaining position of those remaining was strengthened, particularly as catastrophes had ended the reinsurance spiral in which participants earned a precarious living by "taking in each other's laundry".

In August, Cologne Re told clients that over the next five years it would cease providing cover for catastrophe on a proportional basis.

In October, the UK market was notified by European reinsurers that cover for damage from terrorist attack would no longer be included free in property reinsurance. Munich Re, again, had been warning of the implications of increasing political risk for property insurance for years.

In its 1993 annual catastrophe review, it stated that wherever there is a risk of large losses, reinsurers must obtain in full a margin sufficient to pay them "irrespective of whether the original rates charged by their reinsured clients provide these margins or not".

Furthermore, account must be taken not only of past losses, but of the risk that future catastrophe costs may be higher still.

The same argument applies to proportional business. With original prices so low that they are often barely sufficient to pay for a medium-sized fire claim, "reinsurers are in effect covering major fire losses free of charge, not to mention natural catastrophe losses," says Munich Re management board member Fedor Nierhaus.

Munich Re will no longer follow inadequate original prices, and will also set limits on catastrophe exposure in proportional contracts, which Mr Nierhaus describes as "a matter of fundamental importance." Such caps have suddenly become the rule rather than the exception in the US.

Serge Osoff, president, reinsurance operations, of the French SCOR group, says "we decided to show the market that enough was enough". SCOR's accounts are probably the most transparent of any European reinsurer, with major losses - and any subsequent recovery - shown more quickly than by its competitors.

"We have to replenish and increase our catastrophe reserves, and therefore we need better margins," he says. SCOR group companies too will emphasise non-proportional and facultative business, but will renew proportional on a selected basis after careful review of catastrophe accumulations.

"We will co-operate with all clients who are prepared also to share their good results," he adds.

Perhaps the most radical step, however, was that taken by NRG. It announced its complete withdrawal from non-life reinsurance in March after observing that "the vagaries of the American tort system... exploited by a surfeit of plaintiff lawyers make it virtually impossible to transact liability business on a profitable basis."

□ Trevor Petch is editor of the FT World Insurance Report



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REINSURANCE III

Hurricane Andrew was bad but it could have cost a lot more, reports Richard Lapper

The big one that missed Miami

HURRICANE Andrew, the biggest ever US catastrophe loss was bad - but it could have been much worse. Had Andrew hit Miami last August instead of less built-up areas of Florida and Louisiana, the damage would have been much greater than the \$15.5bn in losses the storm actually caused. Even so the impact of the hurricane on the local reinsurance market, which contributed to \$22.97bn in catastrophe losses for the year as a whole, has been stark.

Last year's losses have depressed industry profitability and put many smaller and medium-sized reinsurers under further financial strain leading many to reduce their involvement in the market and a decline in capacity, with the resulting fall in capacity forcing a sharp increase in prices. The scale of the hurricane has also served to highlight a longer term trend in which catastrophe losses are becoming bigger and more frequent. Losses from catastrophes rose steadily during the 1980s with the annual toll reaching \$2.3bn in 1988, \$2.5bn in 1989 and \$7.6bn in 1990, when claims from hurricane Hugo alone

TOP 10 US REINSURERS BY NET PREMIUMS written in 1992 (\$m)

General Reinsurance	1,870
Employers Reinsurance	1,410
American Re-insurance	1,010
Prudential Re	704
Constitution Reinsurance	383
Swiss Reinsurance	378
Skandia America Re	372
Transamerica Re	364
Transatlantic Re	323
Munich American Re	323

Source: Standard & Poor's Rating Group

amounted to \$4.2bn. During 1990 and 1991 losses stayed at a high level, amounting to \$2.82bn and \$4.72bn respectively.

Figures for the first three months from Property Claims Services, the body which collates data for the industry, indicate that the trend is continuing.

Anticipated claims for the first quarter amounted to \$2.5bn. The bulk of the first quarter loss was provided by a large storm which hit 24 southern and eastern states between 11 and 14 March. Claims from the World Trade Center bombing on 26 February amount to more than

\$510m. "The industry has to accept that the traditional pattern of periods of low loss frequency punctuated by the occasional bad year is no longer applicable," commented the specialist newsletter *Catastrophe Reinsurance*.

Rates have risen sharply. Reinsurance premiums which were moving gently upwards at last year's mid-year renewals rose sharply at the end of the year and have climbed higher again this year, bringing the US firmly into line with the hardening market in Europe and elsewhere.

Increases of rates ranged from 10 per cent to 100 per cent on January 1993 renewals. Fur-

ther tightness, especially in the property market, was evident at mid-year renewals. The terms and conditions of many reinsurance policies sold to US buyers have tightened.

According to Mr Alan Cranfield, reinsurance broker with Alexander Howden, pro-rata reinsurance treaties bought by US companies are now much more likely to include caps on the catastrophe exposures that they cover. Mr Cranfield said that 90 per cent of such policies included caps at the end of the mid-year renewals, compared with 70 per cent at the end of last year.

Reinsurers are also more likely to insist that insurers agree to accept bigger deductibles, retaining more of their risks on their own books. This in turn is prompting many insurers to reduce the amount of cover they offer to their own policyholders, especially in areas highly exposed to catastrophe risks such as coastal Florida.

In the longer term the trends seem certain to put many smaller reinsurance companies under increasing financial pressure leading to a further consolidation in the market.

Standard & Poor's, the US rating agency, says that 1992 losses drove up the industry's combined ratio (expenses plus claims against premiums) to 118.2 per cent compared with 106.3 per cent in 1991, leading to a sharp depression in profitability.

In spite of its capital gains of more than \$970m, the earnings of the US reinsurance industry plummeted during 1992. Profitability as measured by return on revenue dropped 10 percent.

The long-term outlook is for greater market consolidation as smaller companies come under tighter financial pressure

age points to 2.88 per cent in 1992 from 13.95 per cent in 1991. The industry's pre-tax profits declined by 51 per cent to \$663m compared with \$23n in 1991, while profits - as measured by return on equity - fell by 747 basis points to 6.34 per cent in 1992. Excluding realised gains it fell to 0.59 per cent.

S & P's figures show that the

industry's better capitalised reinsurers have fared better than their weaker rivals, generally posting better results.

"Simply put, larger well-capitalised reinsurers are in a better position to withstand such devastating losses," say Thomas Walsh and Mary Ann Gangemi, of Standard & Poor's.

Financially stronger well positioned reinsurers have been able to "cherry pick" books of business from both primary companies looking to leave the reinsurance business and professional reinsurers who have lost market share or status.

The top 10 reinsurers' increased their market share to 57 per cent in 1992, compared with 44 per cent in 1985 and 53 per cent in 1991, say S & P. The top 20 reinsurers are responsible for more than 75 per cent of net premiums written. Beyond the top 20 almost 90 per cent of premiums are underwritten by only 35 companies.

"The consolidation process, accelerated by the most recent string of catastrophes, is expected to continue as many of the smaller firms deteriorate financially due to the less profitable business written in recent years," say S & P's Walsh and Gangemi.

"These losses will require further loss reserve strengthening which for some will create unbearable pressure on an already fragile capital base," the two analysts add.

US catastrophe record 1970-1992



Source: Property Claims Services division of American Insurance Services Group

Global warming makes insurers sweat, writes Vanessa Young

Natural disasters multiply

THE scope and frequency of claims due to natural catastrophes has risen drastically over recent decades leading to unprecedented losses for insurers and reinsurers alike.

The trend was highlighted by Swiss Re in *Sigma*, its monthly review of reinsurance developments. Its review of catastrophe and other major losses in 1992 shows that natural disasters again dominated the year with a record 130 events resulting in an insured loss of \$22.5bn, up 106 per cent on the previous year's figure.

Nor was the long-term comparison any healthier. Loss figures have remained high for the last four years while average losses rose alarmingly. From 1970 to 1981 the insured loss per catastrophic event averaged \$84m (1992 prices). Between 1983 and 1991, however, the figure rose to \$132.8m. Swiss Re concluded that economic factors were responsible for only a small proportion of the losses; GNP increased by 85 per cent over

the last 23 years, while insured losses increased by over 900 per cent.

Others factors, including the settlement and industrialisation of vulnerable areas and an increase in insurance density were no less important and may gain further significance. This applied especially to climatic conditions "since it appears quite likely that the loss surge is at least in part due to climatic change."

Sigma says that its statistics do not tell us precisely "how or why mankind aggravates catastrophe risks or allows them to become worse..." but that they "do clearly indicate that risks are increasing they give us the urgent warning to examine the causes of these trends and to develop effective

preventive strategies."

Research by Munich Re has highlighted "already disturbing signs of the worldwide warming of the atmosphere". For example, 1990 was the warmest year since meteorological records began, and six of the last 10 years have seen global temperatures higher than all previous readings.

Current information, seems to point to a global rise in temperature of between 1.5 and 4.5 degrees by the end of the next century. Assuming that all the predicted effects of the man-made greenhouse effect become reality, just what will mankind be up against? Munich Re assumes the following line of development:

• A warmer atmosphere would result in a greater

exchange of energy adding to the momentum of vertical exchange processes which are the driving force in the development of tropical cyclones, tornadoes and thunderstorms resulting in increased frequency and strength.

• More severe winter storms in Europe similar to those in late January and March 1990 which resulted in an insured loss of DM17.3bn are feasible.

• Increased exposure to storm surges and flooding in low-lying, densely-populated regions such as Bangladesh, because of a 30cm-100cm rise in sea levels within 100 years.

The jury has still not reached its verdict on global warming. However, most of its members would probably support the view expressed by

Swiss Re in its 1990 annual report that "reinsurers cannot afford to wait for scientists to provide evidence of how climatic change will influence natural events such as storm, hail and flooding and so on. Underwriting policy and commitment acceptance must be adjusted now to possible future developments."

But just how can the insurance and reinsurance industry cope with the increased loss potential of natural catastrophes?

Munich Re believes that industry can either adjust to the situation or minimise or prevent the effects and suggests a number of instruments that the risk community has at its disposal including:

• Charging premiums com-



Storm damage in Florida: a question of frequency

mensurate with risk, which would mean breaking down the product into its constituent parts and calculating the risk premium for each peril that could impact on an account. It should be kept in mind that historical return periods for these perils may well have been altered by global warming. The challenge for reinsurers is to provide cover at rates that not only reflect the past, but to set prices

which anticipate future loss. • Substantial deductibles and insurance participation by the insured. Munich Re demonstrates the effectiveness of a deductible in its study 1990 *Winter Storms in Europe*, illustrating how a deductible of DM500 on a German home-owners' comprehensive policy would have reduced aggregate insured losses by 30 per cent and the number of insured losses by 40 per cent.

• Liability limits per loss event or area with those liabilities rendered transparent by determining accumulation. • Limits on cover or exclusions for certain hazards. • Loss prevention through policyholder education about measures which may bring about a reduction in weather damage claims. • Optimal loss settlement. • Munich Re maintains that the effects of climatic change need not have a negative impact as long as the above disciplines are introduced. However, clients of insurers and reinsurers would have to be aware of environmental changes to motivate them to take suitable countermeasures such as participation in the United Nations International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction aimed at combating the increased danger of natural disasters or ratification of the World Climate Convention. □ Vanessa Young is a staff writer at the FT World Insurance Report

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REINSURANCE IV

AT a time when global reinsurance capacity has been contracting at record speed, in Latin America and the former Soviet bloc relaxation of state control over the insurance industry is eroding the domination of nationalised reinsurers.

Most of Latin America, including the most attractive markets, is opening to foreign direct investment in insurance, as is central Europe, while most of eastern Europe has seen a rapid increase in new insurers with domestic or joint venture capital.

For the economies of Latin America, the 1980s was "The Lost Decade" afflicted by political instability, high inflation, capital flight and the burden of debt service. International financial institutions are now prepared to invest once again.

In the north, Mexico will become even more attractive with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), while in the south economic integration is being fostered through Mercosur, the planned common market linking Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Mercosur will eventually introduce freedom of insurance services, creating indigenous impetus for the dissolution of the still-monopolised Brazilian and Uruguayan reinsurance markets. Argentina has abolished its state reinsurance monopoly, as Chile did at the beginning of the 1990s.

Other measures of market deregulation have been implemented in, for example, Colombia and Peru, and also in Brazil, where last month a board for the first time made up of



Earthquake victims on two continents: Mexican women at a makeshift morgue ... (Picture: UPI)



...and an elderly Georgian survivor of an earthquake which killed his family and destroyed his home and his village (Picture: AP)

As centralised control is swept away, Latin America and the ex-Soviet bloc become expanding markets, writes Trevor Petch

Crumbling monoliths offer new opportunities

professional insurers rather than purely political nominees was appointed to the monopoly IRB in Venezuela, measures to open up the market have been delayed by political instability.

Mr Egbert William, board member responsible for the region at Cologne Re, says that "As a reinsurer, we now have many things we could wish for. We think it represents an opportunity for us."

A measure of the degree of underlying change is the fact that only two or three years ago Cologne Re was considering withdrawing from the region, but this December will establish a new operation in Buenos Aires to service the Southern Cone.

At the end of July, Transatlantic Reinsurance Co announced the formation of a new division in Miami to

underwrite Latin American business. While the number of direct insurers operating will decline, those which remain will be financially stronger and technically more sophisticated and demanding, the divisional head Javier Vigil says. He adds that as a new entrant to the market unburdened by the effects of past losses, Transatlantic aims to be "a premier player in Latin America" beyond the year 2000.

It is not a reinsurer's Eldorado, however. A prime concern is catastrophe exposure, particularly in the north which is subject both to earthquake and windstorm. In August last year, Cologne Re advised its clients that it would cease providing catastrophe cover on a proportional basis by 1997. "A non-proportional basis is the only reasonable way to reinsure catastrophes," Mr William comments.

Mr Georg Daschner, deputy executive manager with responsibility for the region at leading provider Munich Re, expresses similar concerns regarding catastrophe exposure and points out that deregulation does not bring automatic benefits.

In Chile, when tariffs were freed along with the abolition of the reinsurance monopoly, "many reinsurers only saw the fantastic statistics, thought the market must be sound, and offered high levels of capacity and commissions," he recalls. As competition, premium levels plummeted and fear of competition delayed the required underwriting adjustments.

Reinsurance market conditions are not conducive to an exact repetition of that scenario, but Mr Daschner warns

that the freeing of tariffs and controls on policy conditions has also led to a collapse in original premium levels in Colombia and Mexico, for example.

The inadequacy of property insurance rates becomes particularly apparent, he adds, when the portion to cover earthquake is removed. "We need to separate this price out," he emphasises, so that a

stantial volume of marine and aviation business, as well as hard currency property risks, in the international market. In much of both regions, there is a shortage of experienced underwriting staff, the former because insurers were few, the latter because they were many but effectively insulated from technical decisions by set tariffs and compulsory cessations.

In the past, developing insurance markets with a shortage of local capital such as eastern Europe have been able to rely upon proportional reinsurance support, now in short supply while non-proportional cover is expensive.

Subsidiaries of major western insurers or joint ventures - Allianz, Generali, AIG and Alte Leipziger are among the most active - can rely on their parents and their existing relationships with leading reinsurers. Others buy such protection as they can afford and run the remainder on a net basis.

In Poland, which has a comparatively large number of small insurers, co-insurance is developing, and a new local reinsurer is being formed by market leader PZU, which is awaiting privatisation.

The problem of reinsurance is greatest in the former USSR. Russia has well over 1,000 new

insurers, most of them already licensed, who are nowadays trying to cover their rouble reinsurance requirements on the local market. Ingosstrakh, the former Soviet hard currency insurer, provides some, as do the now emerging new local reinsurance companies all over the country.

Cologne Re (which also owns 10 per cent of the largest Russian privately-owned insurer, ASKO), and Munich Re also do so selectively, although both are more active in providing the markets of the former USSR with scarce hard currency reinsurance.

An area in which reinsurance support has had important local impact is in cover for motorists abroad. Uniquely in Europe, states of the former USSR (with the exception of Estonia) have no motor liability insurance legislation, and have been unable to join the Green Card system.

French market leader UAP reinsures Green Cards underwritten by PZU which are marketed by the state insurers of Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus, as well as by private sector insurers in Estonia. Last month UAP and its partners, together with Polish broker Grupa Polska, opened a motor claims bureau in Warsaw.

Chris Clark on liability for injuries caused by delayed-action pollution

Environmental time-bombs

A LOT of attention is being paid to a series of judgments handed down by the supreme judicial court in France, the Cour de Cassation, in December 1990.

In these, the court effectively outlawed "claims-made" policy wordings which liability insurers now rely upon to manage their exposure to claims from the past.

Under a claims-made policy, the policyholder is covered only for claims submitted during the policy period. Under earlier "occurrence based" policies, the cover remained open into the future for claims arising from events that occurred during the policy period, but whose consequences were discovered years later, such as asbestos bodily injury, latent defects in buildings and gradual pollution.

The claims-made form, as similar policy wordings based on manifestation or discovery of harm, allow insurers and reinsurers much more control over the size of outstanding liabilities at the end of each underwriting year.

In 1990, the French court ruled, on the grounds of consumer protection, that such policy restrictions imposed an unfair burden on the insured and that, regardless of the wordings included in an insur-

ance contract, the policy holder would be entitled to cover on the basis of the original act causing the harm ("fait générateur"), which insurers see as an even wider trigger than occurrence wordings.

Initially, French insurers thought that the ruling was confined to a narrow class of business relating to the construction industry, but the court seems determined to apply its decision to all liability insurance. To add to these worries, similar developments have since occurred in Belgium and Spain, the first under an article in a non-marine insurance contract law passed in June 1992, and the second following Spanish supreme court judgments in 1991 and 1992 concerning medical liability policies. In each case, claims-made policy wordings were deemed unfairly restrictive on the policyholder.

Because of past experience with long-tail liabilities, most insurers today are unwilling to write liability insurance on an occurrence or similar basis. They simply do not know how to set realistic premiums for such wide exposure to unpredictable risks. These rulings therefore pose a fundamental threat.

There are some signs that regulatory authorities in Bel-

gium and Spain recognise that something needs to be done to stop liability insurance drying up altogether in their countries, but both insurers and reinsurers remain extremely concerned about the French position, according to Matthias Schubert of Cologne Re.

Everyone is hoping that French legislators will do something to correct the situation. If they do not, there is a real danger of leading insurers and reinsurers pulling out of the French liability market, although at present insurers are continuing to write claims-made policies on the understanding that policyholders

some extent holding their breath.

As governments progressively insist that such pollution is cleaned up, often to expensive standards, the parties responsible for clean up are digging out their old liability insurance policies to see if they offer any cover, with a growing community of insurance "archaeology" companies on hand to help them.

So far, most of this has been taking place in North America, where US environmental regulation imposes strict, joint and several, and effectively retroactive liability for problems like contaminated land and groundwater. Under a tidal wave of multi-million dollar claims, US courts separately in each state have a queue of legal cases outstanding in which insurance companies are attempting to resist claims for gradual, or intentional, pollution.

European policies have yet to come under this pressure, largely because policyholders have not yet had to pay out much on environmental clean up. Some policyholder lawyers believe that, as environmental regulations tighten, past policy wordings in Europe will be just as vulnerable to claims as their US counterparts. Other people foresee greater difficulties for policyholders here, because European courts tend to reach more restrictive judgments on commercial law.

With this past experience, many insurers want to have as little as possible to do with future environmental liability. From 1986, all pollution risks have been excluded from general liability policies in the US, while in Europe the partial, "sudden and accidental" exclusions have mostly been introduced more recently.

For wider cover, insurance market pools in France, the Netherlands, Italy and Denmark, and individual insurers elsewhere are offering specialised environmental impairment and other pollution liability policies (loosely known as EILs), which use claims-made wordings and require detailed site inspections before cover is offered.

Chris Clarke is editor of FT Environmental Liability Report

Supreme Court rulings in France are having a profound impact

will not attempt to enforce the supreme court judgment.

Juerg Spuehler of Swiss Re believes that much of the difficulty here is based on misunderstanding of the claims-made principle. Far from penalising the insured, he argues, claims-made wordings simply move claims to a different policy, which is in fact a more favourable one for the policyholder.

Claims that, on an occurrence basis, would have had to be attached to old policies, written many years in the past, under claims-made now trigger today's policy, which is likely to have much higher policy limits and is less likely to have been partially exhausted by previous claims for general liability or product liability losses.

The insured therefore benefits, rather than suffers, under the claims-made form and Mr Spuehler feels that it is essential that insurers and reinsurers take the time to clarify this with regulators and others who fail to appreciate it.

Apart from this issue, environmental liability continues to worry almost everyone, in two forms: the overhang of exposure to claims from past pollution and the development of an effective insurance market for the future. On the historic backlog of pollution incidents, those who wrote general public liability policies over the last 30 years or so are to

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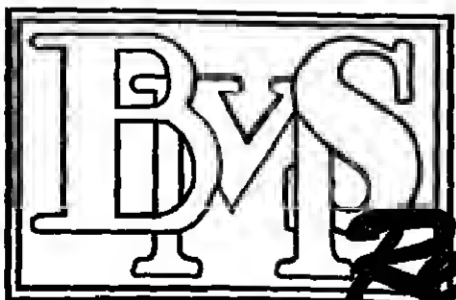


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FINANCIAL TIMES NEWSLETTERS

REINSURANCE V

Financial products still sell despite tighter rules, writes Trevor Petch

The tax man cometh

WHILE demand for financial reinsurance is on the increase, there is also greater regulatory concern over how it is being used.

Lloyd's is currently attempting to ring-fence its old year liabilities in a specially created entity, NewCo. The exercise is like that of some financial reinsurance products, aiming to stabilise the effect on current trading and capital management of a past book of long-tail business while making full use of the time value of money. The financial reinsurance jargon for this is obtaining "surplus relief".

At the same time, the Serious Fraud Office is examining the use by syndicates formerly managed by the Gooda Walker agency of "Time & Distance" policies (T&Ds), under which a predetermined set of payments exceeds premium paid. Formally accepted in the UK as a reinsurance policy, T&Ds are pure funding instruments whose main function, according to the Institute of Actuaries, "is to avoid admitting that reserves have been discounted".

The Inland Revenue permits T&D premiums as a tax deduction, but also insists that credit be taken for the full value of the policy immediately, creating an apparent (but taxable) current year profit.

The Inland Revenue has been suspicious of Lloyd's funds flowing offshore for over a decade since it put a stop to "rollovers", reinsurance policies on which one year's premium was the previous year's profit commission. This enabled tax free funds to be built up offshore.

This is also the main aim of financial reinsurance, according to an Inland Revenue/Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) discussion paper on equalisation reserves published last month, this time achieved by "somewhat artificial transactions to exploit loopholes in the accounting conventions".

Prudential concerns like those concerning T&Ds are also apparent: assets are transferred beyond local jurisdiction, and there is a risk of distortion in insurers' financial statements.

At its simplest, financial (or "finite risk") reinsurance is a T&D with timing risk. Loss Portfolio Transfers (LPTs) enable an insurer to book a current credit while reinsuring a block of old business. For the reinsurer, they are almost risk-free, and they can be structured to operate much like a rollover. LPTs may be useful in managing the run-off of a discontinued account, but were also a popular method for US insurers to obtain "surplus relief", causing regulatory concern that a precarious financial position was being disguised.

Prospective Aggregate Covers (PACs) are similar, but apply to business yet to be written. These and the more

aimed at "surplus relief", and with potential implications for more sophisticated covers. UK insurers must also record negative experience account balances as liabilities in their 1992 returns.

The EC Insurance Accounts Directive may help to clarify some of these issues by outlawing implicit discounting, requiring separate identification of reinsurance, assets and liabilities to be stated gross, and limitation of provisions to a "necessary" level.

US prudential concerns are identical to those in Europe. At the end of 1992, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) released FASB standard 113, addressing transfer of risk among other reinsurance issues. This required liabilities to be stated gross, reinsurance recoverables to be treated as assets, reinsurance transactions of which the substance is not provision of an indemnity (based on considerations such as risk transfer and the reinsurer's risk of loss) to be accounted as a deposit, and enforced separate accounting of provisions for the prospective and retrospective elements of hybrid covers.

Most importantly, it forbade immediate recognition of a gain or loss from any retrospective contract, which must now be spread over the term of the policy. More recently, FASB, through its Emerging Issues Task Force (EITF), issued new accounting rules affecting "multiple-year retrospective rated reinsurance contracts". These require ceding companies to record experience account balances on such contracts as assets or (when negative) liabilities.

The EITF acted in response to concern by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that following Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki, insurers may have placed underwriting losses off balance sheet by not recording negative experience account balances in so-called funded catastrophe covers.

One company which has restated its 1992 results to take

account of the task force's recommendations is Phoenix Re, which had a funded catastrophe cover with USF&G. As a result, its 1992 operating loss increased from \$50,000 to \$3.68m, and its net premium income fell by 10.9 per cent to \$48.4m.

"The EITF conclusions eliminate many of the GAAP advantages of funding property catastrophe losses through multi-year contracts," says Mr Dan Marren, president and chief executive officer of Commercial Risk Re-Insurance Co, the financial reinsurance subsidiary of French reinsurer SCOR. "For property catastrophe, the incurred event becomes known and losses are paid quickly, so there is no avoiding the asset or liability issue," he adds.

Specialist financial reinsurers are seeking new kinds of business

However, Mr Marren believes that multi-year arrangements continue to be attractive for long-tail casualty business, for which losses are accrued on an incurred but not reported (IBNR) basis and there is considerable uncertainty in the estimates. According to Mr Marren, "for casualty lines, shared risk programmes provide an effective means to protect against adverse loss development while allowing companies to benefit from favourable development".

Funded catastrophe covers, however, have been written less by specialist financial reinsurers than by traditional reinsurers seeking new kinds of business. Three years ago, Ms Maralyn Fichte, now vice president, insurance derivatives, at Bankers' Trust, criticised "the badwagon of funded catastrophe reinsurance". While buyers might like it on an opposite basis, adoption by reinsurers of credit risk, some times with automatic reinstatement clauses doubling the exposure, "could lead to a disaster," she suggested.

Profile: how Centre Re acquired its dynamic reputation

Unorthodox duo's initiative

CENTRE RE has grown apace in 1993. The initial public offering in the US in the spring and the new plans to launch a new catastrophe reinsurer in Bermuda in the summer have underlined its reputation as one of the world's most dynamic reinsurance companies.

The Bermuda-based company, controlled by Zurich Insurance, has shown an impressive record of growth and profitability since its launch from scratch in 1989. Premium income has increased from just \$368m in 1989 to an estimated \$1.1bn in 1992. Profits amounted to \$65.5m in 1992, a 37 per cent increase compared with 1991, and representing a return on equity of 12.7 per cent, and by mid-1993 the combined assets of the group amounted to \$4.5bn.

Since its initial capitalisation of \$350m in 1989, assets have risen on average by 63 per cent a year. But it is not just the speed and scale of growth that marks off Centre Re from many of its competitors.

The company's founders - Mr Stephen Gluckstern, the chairman of Centre Re Holdings, and Michael Palm, the executive vice-president who heads up the Bermuda operations - are both in their early 40s and had no experience in the reinsurance industry before launching Centre Re. Indeed their backgrounds are even more unorthodox than that. Both men have liberal arts backgrounds - Palm did academic research in English literature, specialising in the work of the American poet Wallace Stevens, while Gluckstern is an educationalist who researched preschool influences on the ability of children to learn.

They met for the first time - in 1976 - teaching English in pre-revolutionary Iran. Ten years later - after business school and beginning banking careers - the two teamed up again at the Philadelphia offices of Berkshire Hathaway, the US investment group led by Warren Buffett.

Influenced by the climate of innovation in US finance during the 1980s, they saw reinsurance as an underdeveloped part of the financial markets ripe for new ideas. "We wanted



Michael Palm: a background in English literature



Stephen Gluckstern: a researcher into child learning processes

to take a more heavily financial approach to insurance," explains Palm. "This was a sector with very substantial cash flows which ought to have the same kind of stability and product sophistication as is found in other financial services."

"We wanted to focus on stability and long-term relationships instead of cyclical and ups and downs in pricing," says Palm. The two men thought the answer lay to

began by specialising in what Palm calls "retrospective" financial reinsurance deals covering what is known as "timing" and "interest rate risks" - the possibility that claims may emerge faster than expected on a book of liability business, or that trends in interest rates may reduce the value of funds available to meet known claims.

Palm and Gluckstern decided to locate in Bermuda because the territory's regulators allow

The two founders, both still in their 40s, first met while teaching English in pre-revolutionary Iran

some extent in a new kind of reinsurance contract. "We wanted to find an intersection between highly leveraged and highly risk exposed business and what had been called financial reinsurance - closer to a banking or funding deal than a traditional reinsurance contract," he adds. "We wanted to take a multi-year approach to insurance costs, taking volatility out of year to year deals."

The result was what Palm admits was seen as a very ambitious effort to raise \$250m to support a new reinsurer. Backing came from Kemper Re, a US reinsurer, Marsh McLennan, the world's biggest insurance broker, JP Morgan, the merchant bank, and, in particular, Zurich Insurance, which has subsequently become a majority shareholder. Launched in 1988, Centre Re

its insurers to count future investment income as part of its funds to meet claims, essentially permitting companies to discount their reserves.

"The US regulatory environment introduces many inefficiencies," explains Palm. "Our goal to concentrate on the economics of a transaction not to do business when they didn't make sense." The regulatory framework also helped Centre Re contain its costs. "We don't need to get authorisation for each separate line of business which we underwrite. We can move more quickly than our competitors," he explains.

Over the past five years the nature of business has changed, with the group beginning to concentrate on more typical reinsurance risks. In 1992 only 10 per cent of reinsurance contracts underwritten by Centre Re are now "retrospective", compared with 100

per cent in 1988. The trend will be accentuated by changes in US accounting rules in early 1993, which remove some of the advantages for ceding insurers of using financial reinsurance deals. Meanwhile, Centre Re's commitment to compete in more orthodox markets has been underlined by a decision to start a new catastrophe reinsurance company.

Even so, despite the changed focus, several aspects of the company's strategy and style are likely to remain distinctive. The way that Centre Re analyses risks and underwrites its policies marks it off from some companies in the industry, for example. Its staff of just over 100 includes at least 30 actuaries, who are adept at using mathematical models to assess risk. Barely concealing his contempt for some of the underwriting practices of the Lloyd's market in the late 1980s, Palm says: "We don't believe in subjective underwriting where you guess what the range is in which losses might fall."

He insists that the company is conservative in its analysis and pricing of risks. "The history of the industry shows that the successful people have taken a very conservative view. Things tend to turn out worse." By underwriting in this fashion Centre Re is able to assume more risk on its own books and therefore has more influence in the marketplace. You don't want to be a follower. It tends to underwrite "lines" or shares of individual risks of at least \$50 per cent. Centre Re also tends to favour longer-term relationships with its clients with contracts stretching on average for between three and five years. In 1992 the company underwrote just 175 contracts, each of which had an average reinsurance premium of \$25m. These factors tend to mean that retention rates are higher and costs are lower.

Above all Palm remains confident and observes that the reinsurance industry as a whole seems to be following in Centre Re's footsteps, with better pricing and terms in the market increasingly controlled by the industry's financially stronger companies.

Richard Lapper

Brokers are being pushed in new directions, says Lee Coppack

To advise and to guide

THE reinsurance broker is becoming less a clearing house for capital and capacity and more a professional adviser active in the development of the market.

Clients demand more evidence of the broker's value than a promise to improve on the rates, though the ability to find capacity at a reasonable price remains important.

In a market where capacity is tight and solvency is a key issue, the broker can provide a real service to the ceding insurer and also to the reinsurer who is looking for catastrophe protection of its book. Those who do not are likely to find their business dwindling in the face of competitive pressure.

Brokers compete with reinsurers for business. Ceding insurers do not have to use a broker; traditionally the professional reinsurance companies, mainly based in continental Europe, have written most of their business directly. One of the main reasons has been their close relationship with their domestic, direct insurance market.

Dieter Losse, chairman and chief executive of the respected international reinsurance broker Greig Fester, said: "The serious brokers are all clear that they can only justify their position in the chain if they are genuinely adding value."

In territories, such as the UK, which are broker markets, the reinsurers have been happy to take business from brokers with the proviso that the broker must not block the relationship between the direct insurer and the reinsurer. Reinsurers are increasingly insisting on knowing just what risks they are taking. Cedants have to submit to scrutiny or they find themselves short of reinsurance, according to European insurance analyst

Tim Dawson at Lehman Brothers in London. "The flight to quality works both ways. Reinsurers can pick and choose from which insurers they want to accept business."

Michael White, deputy chairman of international reinsurance at Willis Corroon, also says that over the last two or three years brokers have had to spend far more time on renewal analysing the business and objectives of the cedant and discussing the best approaches to the business. Clients and potential clients demand more evidence of the broker's value than a promise

based international reinsurance broker, the Benfield Group. Since 1988, Greig Fester's turnover has risen from \$16.3m to \$42.8m at the end of 1992. Benfield, which is an excess of loss specialist, nearly tripled its turnover between 1990 and June 1992 with a rise from \$13.8m to \$38.8m.

Benfield, under its chairman Matthew Harding, plays an active role in developing the excess of loss market since the demise of the notorious LMX, or London market spiral. For example, it insists that the ceding insurer takes a co-insurance of at least 10 per cent of

get all the capacity they want from their traditional sources, reinsurers.

Solvency is a considerable worry, following the collapse of once important London market firms and problems in the Scandinavian market. New capital has been coming into the reinsurance market, but its willingness to provide continuity is untested.

Faced with an insolvent reinsurer, the broker not only has an unhappy client, for whom finding replacement cover may be difficult in a hard market, but it also faces an administrative headache. The London market system of "net accounting", which is highly convenient when all the parties are solvent, is a source of major problems for the broker if one of them fails.

Leading insolvency counsel Gabriel Moss QC explains that typically the broker acts as a "clearing house" for payments between insurers and reinsurers.

However, in an insolvency, only the principals to the contract, the insurer and reinsurer, are permitted to set-off the amounts they have outstanding with each other. The broker's standing effectively vanishes.

Increased expectations from clients coupled with competition for scarce reinsurance capacity is putting pressure on the skills of brokers and further rationalisation is likely in the London market. Although there is no register of reinsurance brokers as such, the fall in the number of Lloyd's brokers to 218 with 42 resignations and only five admissions last year is likely to indicate the trend. Those who can offer the expertise will play an essential role maintaining the reinsurance market.

Lee Coppack is an insurance writer and analyst

Clients are now demanding a lot more of brokers than merely to obtain better rates

to improve on the rates.

One way that brokers have been enhancing their value to cedants has been through the development of research and analytical tools to help them understand the implications of what they have been writing in terms of catastrophe exposure, the geographical spread of their book in terms of perceived natural hazards.

Explained Dieter Losse: "The broker is in a unique position to help the insurer understand the nature of their exposures from the reinsurance perspective, particularly in a hard market, and advise on a range of options."

In addition to preparing and placing programmes, brokers may handle claims and help prepare documentation in response to the reinsurers' requirements for increased information. They also monitor the solvency of reinsurers and reinsurance markets.

The need for specialist skills is increasing reflected in the results of firms such as Greig Fester and another London

any programme. In this way, Matthew Harding believes, the direct insurer retains an interest in keeping claims down, which in turn pleases the reinsurer and promotes a good, long term relationship.

And against the trend of brokers distancing themselves from underwriting activities, Benfield has now announced that, subject to approval from the Department of Trade and Industry, it will set up a UK based excess of loss reinsurer. The new company will have fully paid up capital of \$50m (\$75m) and is intended to begin underwriting effect from January 1, 1994.

No other details have yet been released, but it seems almost certain that Benfield applies to its brokered programmes will be a fundamental part of the new company's underwriting policy.

Direct insurers also look to their reinsurance brokers to help in analysing security, particularly in a hard market when they may not be able to

Münchener Rück
Munich Re

Barclays de Zotte Wedd acted as financial adviser in the purchase of 30.5 million Skandia Group. Forsaking AB shares for SEK 3.14 billion.

June 1993



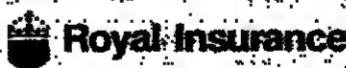
Barclays de Zotte Wedd acted as lead manager to Confederation Life in the issue of £100 million subordinated notes.

February 1993



Barclays de Zotte Wedd acted as financial adviser to GRE Group in the sale of its Spanish operations to Group AMA.

April 1993



Barclays de Zotte Wedd acted as lead manager to Royal Insurance Holdings Plc in the issue of £76 million convertible subordinated bonds due 2007.

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REINSURANCE VI

Life becomes more complex, says Norma Cohen

Aware of the risks

LIFE reinsurance has traditionally been the low-risk, low-margin end of the business tucked on to a much larger and more profitable general reinsurance capacity.

But staggering losses in some business classes, including usually safe areas such as home and auto reinsurance, are causing a re-think about the merits of life cover for the reinsurance business.

Mr Roger Sansome, director of long-term business at Mercentile and General, a subsidiary of Prudential plc and the UK's largest life reinsurance underwriter, said that 10 years ago only a third of M&G's business was life reinsurance. Now, life reinsurance is two-thirds of the total and that could go as high as 75 per cent.

"If you get the market right, you should be able to make a better profit out of the on-life business because it's more volatile. The life business is less so and the profits are lower."

But because risks are fairly predictable in pure life cover, reinsurers are able to estimate the incidence of future claims and to price products appropriately.

Indeed, the great shudder which ran through the life reinsurance industry in the late 1980s, when the Aids virus first posed a threat to existing actuarial calculations, has now proved to be somewhat overblown. The incidence of Aids among Britain's insured population has turned out to be at the lowest end of estimates prepared by the Institute of Actuaries and both premium rates and reinsurance rates have eased in the past year.

Mr Wayne Daniel, product development actuary at M&G, said that at his company the premium rate to guarantee a 30-year-old man nearly doubled in three years to reflect the increased risk of Aids. In August 1987, that man would have had to pay monthly premiums of £730 but by April 1990 that had risen to £1455. But the lower than expected rate of Aids has pushed premium rates down to £1250 in April 1993 and there may be scope for further premium reductions.

However, pure life cover, the core of the business, is increas-

ingly taking a back seat to the higher risk but potentially more lucrative market of "living risks". "We think the growth is in all the areas where people can claim while they are still alive," Mr Sansome said, noting that the pace of expansion in these types of policies now outstrips that of straight death cover.

That view is echoed by Mr Jonathan Ludbrooke, assistant general manager at Munich Reinsurance which holds roughly 28 per cent of the UK's life reinsurance market. "For years the reinsurers have been hanging the drum and saying to the life insurers that protection products are the way to go. Now, the direct insurers are getting the message," he said.

The greatest growth areas for life reinsurers are critical illness policies, private medical

The initial shudder about the rapid spread of Aids has proved exaggerated

insurance coverage and long-term care policies for the elderly.

"The state would like to withdraw from provision of benefits and the insurers for the most part are happy to take up the role," Mr Ludbrooke said. But selling these products to a wide portion of the population remains problematic. "Long term care in particular is a hard sell," Mr Sansome said. "We did some market research and found the demand was there until the price was mentioned."

The challenge for the life underwriters and their reinsurers is to find a way to convince the public to buy an expensive product that they still believe is a luxury and not a necessity.

"What is needed are tax breaks and there are no tax breaks although the industry is working on it," Mr Ludbrooke said.

For the reinsurers, one big difficulty remains assessing risk and setting premiums. Since so many life offices rely on the reinsurers to set the rates for them, the reinsurers are now in the position of having to conduct sufficient

research to enable them to price products appropriately.

"There is almost no data on which to base your premiums," Mr Ludbrooke said. The existing information on, say, critical illness experience, covers the general population at large and is often too old or too limited to be of much use. There are substantial statistical variations in life expectancy and healthiness between non-insureds - who tend to be the unemployed and less well-off - and the insured population.

Reinsurers believe that one of the best things which could happen to non-death cover is that some of the nation's largest employers begin bolting on to their pension plans options for that sort of provision. That would give reinsurers the necessary data base to help them consider likely loss experience and get the public acquainted with the merits of products such as critical care cover.

Mr Ludbrooke suggests that leading schemes might wish to offer their members an option of receiving a lower rate of pension while they are healthy with a guarantee of critical care cover if they become ill. The willingness of pension schemes to be more creative in their benefit offers would create a pool by which underwriters could judge loss experience.

A 70-year-old seeking, say, a critical care or PHI policy, is a difficult customer. Although the potential policyholder may have been subject to a full medical examination, insurers do not know how to assess the findings. "Is what the doctors have found comparable to what is normal in a 70-year-old?" Mr Sansome said. "We don't know because we don't know what is comparable in a 70-year-old."

Meanwhile, the data so far suggest that, if anything, reinsurers and direct insurers are underpricing their Permanent Health Insurance products as well as their long-term and critical illness care products.

"We have wanted to raise our PHI rates," Mr Sansome said, noting that stiff competition was preventing M&G, the market leader in reinsuring that product, from doing so. "It's not a market where you can dictate prices because there are other competitors."

Bermuda is the world's fastest growing offshore centre, writes Richard Lapper

Magnetic island in the sun



Bermuda's fashionable resort of Tucker's Town: an idyllic place for handling offshore financial matters

BERMUDA, home of some of the world's fastest growing and innovative reinsurance companies, has benefited from a flood of new interest this year.

More than half a dozen new reinsurance initiatives have been launched, bringing more than \$1bn in fresh capital to the island and consolidating its reputation as the world's biggest offshore insurance and reinsurance centre.

Until this year Bermuda was known as a centre for captive insurers and more recently for highly specialised reinsurers which offer high-level liability covers.

Centre Re, the biggest of Bermuda's reinsurance companies with assets of \$2.9bn, has pioneered so-called finite risk transactions, while ACE and XL insure large - mainly US - corporations against legal awards.

In June, American International Group, one of the world's biggest insurers, reinforced this trend by sponsoring the formation of a new excess liability company, Starr Excess Liability Insurance. Other backers include General Re, Munich Re, Primamerica and Aon Corporation.

However, most attention has focused recently on the catastrophe reinsurance market, with Bermuda hosting a number of significant new initiatives by North American insurers and financiers. Attracted by the recent strength in reinsurance rates and prospect of attractive profits, Marsh McLennan, the world's biggest insurance broker, and JP Morgan, the US bank, sponsored the formation last autumn of Mid-Ocean, a new \$350m reinsurance company.

The company began underwriting in January and in the summer announced plans to go public in the US with an initial public offering expected to raise nearly \$250m.

In the last six months five similar ventures have been formed:

- American International Group announced it was setting up a property catastrophe reinsurer, International Property Catastrophe Reinsurance Co, which aims to provide excess of loss treaty reinsur-

ance for personal and commercial risks. AIG has a 24.4 per cent stake in the \$300m company which will also underwrite retrocessional business for other reinsurers and also some non-catastrophe business.

- Investors including General Re, the biggest US reinsurance company, and AIG have raised \$500m to support Tempest Reinsurance, which is expected to begin underwriting in October.

- Goldman Sachs, the securities house, and Johnson & Higgins, the insurance broker, are organising another company,

Bermuda has recently hosted a series of new North American initiatives on catastrophe reinsurance

Global Capital Reinsurance, which is expected to have some \$300m in capital. Investors include Underwriters Re Holdings Corporation.

- Investors including Warburg, Pincus Investors, General Electric Pension Trust, Investment Private Placement Partners and USF&G, the US insurance company, are raising \$140m to invest in Renaissance Reinsurance. It plans to underwrite property and short-tail casualty insurance,

BERMUDA'S BIG INSURERS
Net insurance premiums written in 1992 (\$m)

Centre Re	1,100.0
American International	880.0
Excel	434.5
ACE	325.4
Oil	187.6
Mid Ocean Re	130.0
Mutual Risk Management	82.2
Heddlington Insurance	74.0

Source: The Bermudaian

earning more than 60 per cent of an expected \$100m a year in premiums from the US market.

- Centre Re itself has formed a Bermuda-based shell company, Centre Cat, which will also underwrite catastrophe reinsurance.

- Separately, General Re is opening a wholly-owned underwriting management company, to help meet growing demand for back office services on the island.

Two obvious attractions are Bermuda's tax regime (companies pay no income or corporate tax and can build up tax-free reserves allowing them to build up much stronger financial strength to meet large scale claims) and its benign regulatory environment.

Bermudian companies are able to avoid the very high so-called "frictional" costs, which are typical of a market - such as London - in which dozens of relatively small

insurers and brokers combine to insure and reinsure large risks.

They tend to conduct a small number of high-value transactions, transferring huge blocks of risk on to their own books in exchange for multi-million dollar premiums.

Already there are signs that the amount of fresh capital in Bermuda is having an impact on rates and terms and conditions on international markets. One prominent London underwriter estimates that capacity for leading US buyers has risen from around \$120m per event to \$150m per event in recent months.

So far, however, there is little sign that Bermudian underwriters are winning market share at the expense of established marketplaces in the North America and Europe, either by offering cheaper policies or better security. Mid-Ocean, the most active Bermu-

dian catastrophe reinsurer at present, generally underwrites portions of reinsurance programmes, in which prices and conditions are set by so-called "lead" underwriters in Lloyd's.

The new companies look set to follow suit. Mr James Stanzard, chief executive of Renaissance, says: "Much of our business will be participations on catastrophe programmes led by recognised lead underwriters."

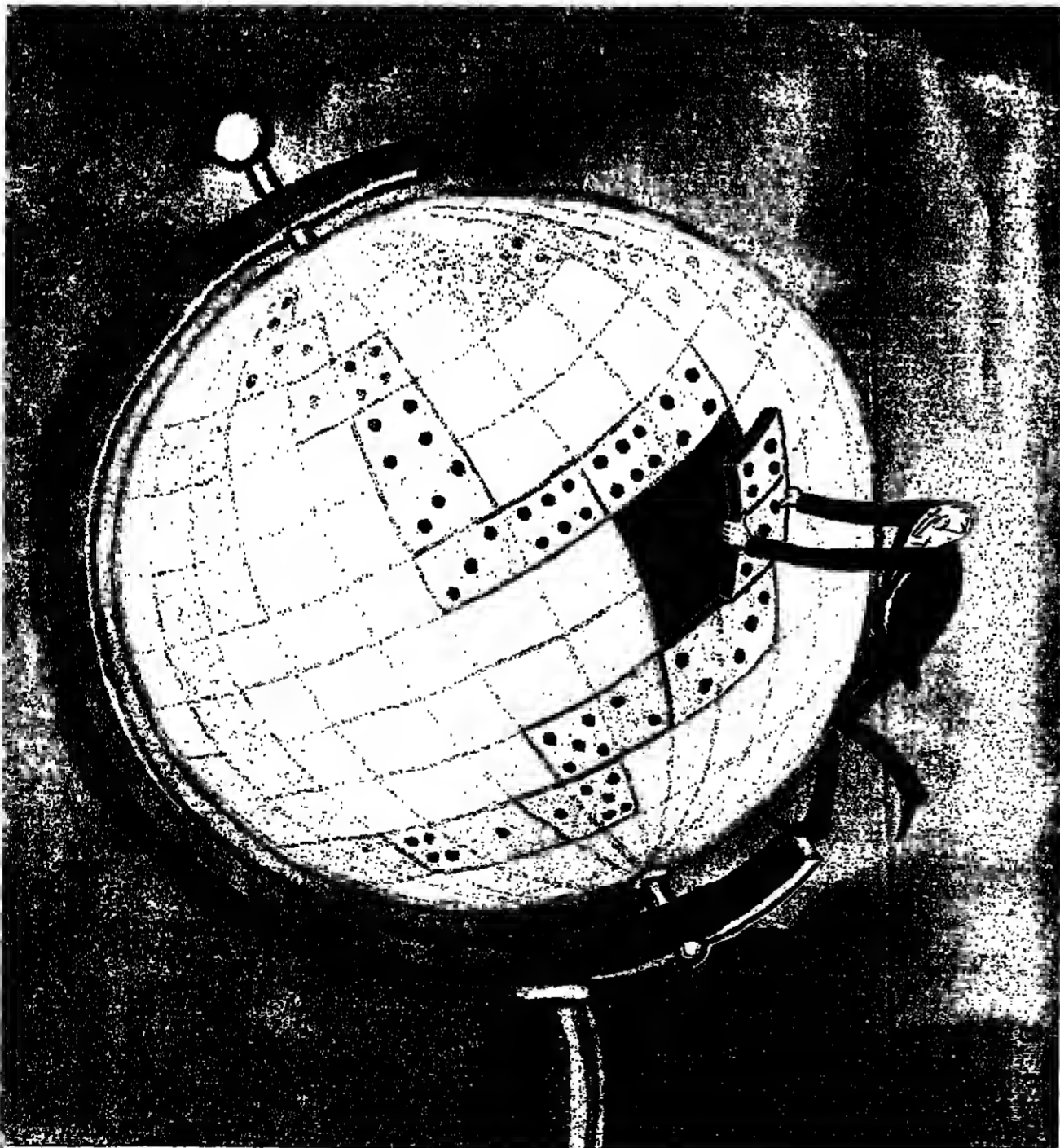
Although there is concern among some US reinsurance buyers about the quality of security in the London market and particularly at Lloyd's, other buyers - especially from Europe and South Africa - are equally sceptical about the durability of Bermudian companies and are particularly mindful of the problems experienced by many Bermudian companies in the mid-1980s.

Industry leaders such as Mr Michael Butt, the chief executive of Mid-Ocean, insist that the Bermudian market "complements" rather than competes with London. Indeed in some other ways the Bermudian market has recently provided direct support for Lloyd's underwriters. Underwriters Capital (Merrett), another new Bermudian company, was formed with the specific purpose of providing quota share reinsurance to the syndicates of the Merrett Group, for example.

Centre Re agreed at the end of last year to back a multi-million pound reinsurance scheme, which will allow Lloyd's Names to obtain stop-loss, or personal, reinsurance. And Centre Re also provides dozens of financial reinsurance policies - called "time and distance" policies - which allow Lloyd's syndicates to manage their reserves more flexibly.

However, as the Bermudian market develops and the confidence of buyers increases, local Bermudian underwriters may begin to seek to lead business.

One prominent London underwriter predicts this could happen in the 1995 renewal season. "Customers are already using Bermuda as a stick to beat us over the head," he says.



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CURRENCIES, MONEY AND CAPITAL MARKETS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND MONEY MARKETS

Pressure on dollar

AFTER last week's poorer than expected payroll figure, the focus of many participants in foreign exchange markets will again be on the dollar/D-mark exchange rate, writes James Blyth.

Although there is little in the way of US data over the next few days, Friday's payroll figure is likely to cast a shadow over the dollar over the next few weeks. It tends to be seen as an important indicator of the data in the forthcoming month.

UK clearing bank base lending rate 9 per cent from January 28, 1993

With the August figure turning out to be a drop of 89,000 on the month compared to expectations of a rise of 144,000, the hope for the continuing disappointment in the US economic recovery may be high.

Expectations of a cut in official German interest rates at Thursday's council meeting of the Bundesbank could also be disappointed.

The Bundesbank may be encouraged to ease policy because of the strength of the D-mark against the dollar. Last month, Mr Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank president-elect, said a strong D-mark would not be in the interest of German exporters.

However, data for M3 monetary growth last month - when the Bundesbank intervened in currency markets to try to keep the ERM together - have not yet been released, and are expected to be well above target range. Mounting evidence that the recession in Germany has bottomed out may also stay the Bundesbank's hand.

This may also be the case when fund managers analyse the currency weightings in their portfolios for the autumn - and the evidence is that they are heavily overweight in the dollar at a time when it has a strong downward bias. According to some analysts, fund managers would have to shed 10 per cent of their dollar holdings to get a neutral position.

POUND SPOT - FORWARD AGAINST THE POUND									
Day's spread	Close	One month	Three months	Six months	One year	Two years	Three years	Four years	Five years
US	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
Canada	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
France	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
Germany	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
Italy	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
Japan	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
Spain	1.4805	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810	1.4810
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Continued on next page

MONDAY INTERVIEW

Into extra time in Japan

Gary Lineker, former England footballer, talks to Charles Leadbeater

The man widely regarded as The Greatest Living Englishman hobbled around the corner. He delivered a melting smile and offered to buy me an orange juice in the canteen.

"Oranji jusu, futatsu," he asked in impeccable Japanese. When the canteen manager refused to take his yen in payment, he remarked quietly: "That's nice - free orange juice."

An international sports superstar, earning thousands of pounds a week as the best-paid foreign player in the Japanese soccer league's first season, he is still pleasantly surprised at getting a free orange juice. The answer to my main question was already becoming clear before I had asked it: Gary Lineker really is a charming person.

And even limping with a broken toe, and dressed in drab blue jeans and T-shirt, he manages to look good, horribly good. Tanned and muscular, with deep brown eyes, slightly greying temples and almost always smiling broadly, he has become a household name in Japan, even though his bad leg has kept him out of the game for most of the season.

The 33-year-old striker's first serious injury has been a big frustration. He has sat on the sidelines as the J-League has taken off, and watching football has become Japan's most fashionable pastime, with crowds of up to 80,000 a game, while his team Nagoya Grampus Eight has fallen towards the bottom of the league and a clutch of unknown Brazilians has taken their team to the top of the table.

Yet, for all that, and in spite of Japan's often torrential summer rain, the move from London's Tottenham Hotspur has reinvigorated the man who came within one goal of Bobby Charlton's record of 48 goals in an England shirt.

"To be honest, I have been surprised that the standard has been so high. There are no negative aspects to the game. Everything is so positive," he explained.

Lineker's excitement is due not just to the J-League's early popularity. It is more than that. Japan, a land where formal good manners are the norm, and Lineker, known as the politest man in British sport, were made for one another.

The most striking thing about Lineker is how personable and modest he is. Yet beneath his apparently effortless politeness, he is extremely controlled. Words are carefully weighed, judgments are measured and rare criticisms are usually indirect.

Lineker admits to loving football. Yet by the end of his career with Spurs his motivation for league games was flagging. The move to Japan, where stadiums are packed to capacity with noisy, flag-waving crowds of mainly young people, has revived him.

"The crowd are what make it," he explained. "Wherever we play the grounds are sold out and colourful. The greatest thing is that the crowd is not at all cynical. Because it is all new to them, they think the whole thing is exciting. Even if you are losing three-nil they still get behind you, and to be honest I have found that really refreshing. It is much easier to motivate yourself here."

The Linekers - wife Michelle, eldest son George (recovering from leukaemia) and recent arrival Harry - are settling well in industrial Nagoya, three hours south of Tokyo.

"Culture shock is lots of little things," reflected Lineker, who also played in Spain for Barcelona in the mid-1990s. "We do most of the same things we did in England: eat out, see friends. Living here has been great, a once in a lifetime opportunity."

His travels with Japanese (he speaks Spanish fluently) make his work more difficult, even though most of the terminology of Japanese soccer - "shootob", "offu sidoh" - is borrowed from English. Language apart, Lineker said that working for a Japanese company - Grampus Eight is the Toyota works team - was not much different from working for a British one.

"You have to be very patient and explain things, and accept that sometimes they will not listen; they do things their way. We train a little longer than in England but not as intensely. There are far more people in the club office, but that is one of the ways they keep down unemployment."

The J-League's success has done more than renew Lineker's enthusiasm. It has also given him a wider perspective on the sport's coming of age in England.

As England prepares for



'It is much easier to motivate yourself here'

Wednesday's match against Poland, which could mark its exit from the World Cup, Lineker has some advice about how the English game should be restructured to make it more internationally competitive - although, as usual, the criticism was delivered by implication.

"Here they are prepared to listen to players and managers, which is certainly something they could learn from in England."

The explanations for

PERSONAL FILE

1960 Born, Leicester.
1978 Joined Leicester City.
1986 Began three seasons in Barcelona.
1988 Won Golden Boot Award for highest goalscorer in Mexico World Cup Finals.
1989 Joined Tottenham Hotspur.
1991 Baby son George contracted leukaemia.
1992 Ended England career with 60 caps as second highest scorer ever.
1992 Joined Nagoya Grampus Eight.

England's demise moved Lineker to the boundaries of his world of carefully chosen, diplomatic phrases. There were hints of bitterness about the unhappy end to his own career (he was substituted in his final game for England) and even a touch of injured pride, if not self-interest: "It is hard to see us qualifying [for the World Cup], and that would be a big blow to the game. Things look pretty bad."

"I just think that we have to bring back the best players who have been dropped. We have proved beyond doubt now that you cannot compete at

international level unless you play your best 11 players. At that level it is not about hustling people and winning the ball all day long, you have to have a bit more than that."

He would not say that he should still be playing for England, but remarked: "We showed in the 1990 World Cup that we could compete with the best in the world. That all seems to have been tossed aside too soon."

He does not lay all the blame at the door of Graham Taylor, the little-loved English manager. The root of the English game's troubles were in the way youngsters learnt to play, Lineker said.

"We will never be as technically gifted as other countries until we change the size of pitches our kids play on. They play on massive pitches, so they are taught to boot the ball as far as possible to get it to the other end. In other countries, Germany and Holland, they deliberately play on smaller pitches so that they learn how to pass."

"If we banned youth football on big pitches, then we might start competing internationally with consistency, rather than occasionally."

The professional game also needed reorganisation, he argued. "We have to cut down the amount of football we play, because we just get lots of injuries. The quality of the game suffers, players are never fresh. In the Italian league they play fewer games, the players are fresher, quicker, better. We should get rid of one of the cup competitions and cut the league down to 18 teams."

Viewed from Japan, the weaknesses of English football are very much the traditional

weaknesses of British industry: a reliance on high-volume, poorly marketed products of variable quality and limited innovation, which require players of great strength but only middling skills, exactly the qualities both the industrial and football training systems are designed to deliver.

Lineker disavowed any ambitions to return to England as a football manager after his two-year stint with the Nagoya team. Yet, after his experience of the J-League success, he could emerge as an eloquent critic of the way the British game is ensnared by the mediocrity of much of its management.

"It would be nice to put something back into the game, some of these ideas. But that is very difficult in England because they do not tend to listen to players. Maybe it will change one day, but they are not receptive to new ideas."

Heretical thoughts on currencies



MICHAEL PROWSE
ON AMERICA

The blowing apart of the European exchange rate mechanism last month was the second failure of a fixed, but theoretically adjustable, exchange rate system in 25 years. In the immediate post-war decades the US was the proud anchor of a global version of the ERM known as the Bretton Woods system. It broke down for painfully familiar reasons. The US failed to keep inflation under control in the late 1960s, thus undermining the existing set of exchange rate parties. The strains were magnified by the growing mobility of international capital - small by today's standards but still a destabilising influence.

As both the US and Germany have failed to provide the stability required of anchor nations, and as no other anchors are in sight, should the world's monetary authorities accept that floating rates are here to stay? Most US economists would say Yes. With \$900bn of foreign exchange transactions occurring daily, they believe governments cannot hope to do more than influence the pace of currency adjustments through shrewdly timed interventions, such as the US move last month to support the dollar.

Free market economists are comfortable with floating rates because they regard the exchange rate as a price, the price of one money in terms of others. They see the case for flexible rates as part and parcel of the general argument for flexible prices. Since governments have no means of discovering what constitutes a correct or "equilibrium" exchange rate, they should not attempt to dictate to markets. Price rigging inevitably creates distortions, whether the market is for fish, commodities or the pound sterling.

This argument is actually less strong than it appears. The essence of market mechanisms is that they are tailored to the different circumstances of particular economic agents. All real prices are the prices of particular commodities and

services. Aggregate price indices - such as the consumer price index - are statistical constructs with little economic meaning.

Consider what happens when the exchange rate is devalued by, say, 5 per cent. At a stroke all domestic prices are reduced by this amount in terms of foreign currencies. The economic circumstances of every exporter are miraculously improved. The gains are reaped by efficient and inefficient alike. This is more like a government decree abruptly changing all prices than a true market mechanism.

Compare this with what happens with fixed exchange rates - when the value of one money in terms of another is held steady. Since currency movements have an economic impact only by changing the ratio of domestic to foreign prices, all the benefits from devaluation (or revaluation) can still be reaped by changes in domestic prices. If domestic prices fall by 5 per cent, they will fall by 5 per cent in foreign currency terms without any change in the exchange rate.

The difference, of course, is that not all prices would fall by the same amount. If trading conditions abroad were tough, efficient companies would reduce costs more rapidly than the less efficient, deservedly gaining market share in the process. The impact of these cost changes would then filter unevenly through the whole domestic economy.

When free market economists hail the virtues of flexible exchange rates, they are implicitly accepting the Keynesian dogma that domes-

tic prices (and wages) are irretrievably sticky. They need to wave the macro wand of the exchange rate only because the micro economy is inflexible. Yet since the efficiency of a market system depends on the flexibility of prices and wages, this is a dangerous concession.

Why should the public always be deemed incapable of accepting the fact that flexible prices are good for everybody in the long term, even if the need for occasional falls in individual prices (or wage rates) requires a temporary sacrifice by some groups? In the 19th century falling prices was regarded as perfectly normal, and not as a harbinger of doom; if productivity is rising they are not inconsistent with rising real wages and profits.

Flexible rates are very much a second best solution. They rarely bring lasting benefits: the dollar has been devalued 80 per cent against the D-Mark and 70 per cent against the yen since 1983, without a conspicuous improvement in the US trade performance. Yet the wild gyrations of flexible exchange rates impose significant costs, because they undermine the ability of producers of real goods and services to plan for the long term. It is no accident that protectionist pressures began to intensify after the collapse of Bretton Woods in the early 1970s.

Creating zones of currency stability will never be easy. But the success of the 19th century Gold Standard suggests that fixed rates are compatible with the kind of economic strains experienced today. Capital was highly mobile then and big economic shifts occurred, such as the rise of Germany as a manufacturing power. But the credibility of the Victorian commitment to low inflation, irrevocably fixed exchange rates and flexible domestic prices and wages were indispensable props. The fact that we have to rely on the blunt instrument of floating rates today should be seen as a mark of failure, a sign that the commitment to market principles is still very partial in most countries.

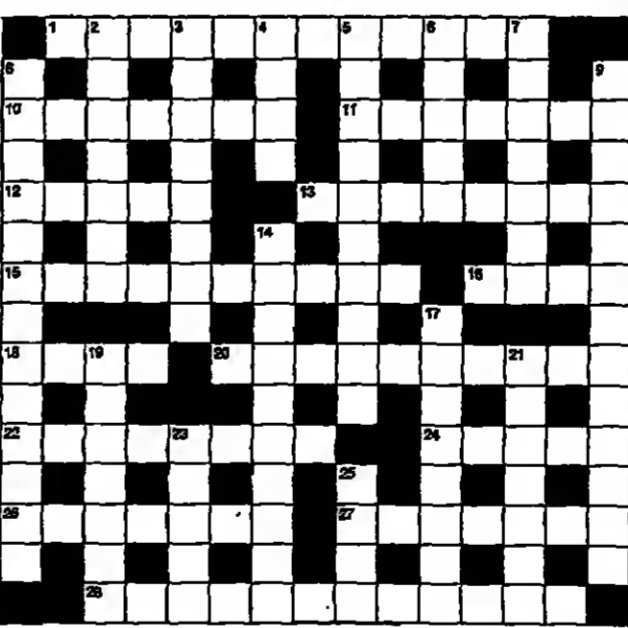
Of broking and jobbing the Pelikan's fond.
See how sweetly he puts your word onto bond.

Pelikan

JOTTER PAD

CROSSWORD

No.8,246 Set by GRIFFIN



- 1 Replaced hard or bought a pedigree animal (12)
10 Leaderless gang takes Heather fishing (7)
11 Make damp site better in a half day (7)
12 Front bulb, albeit but dull (6)
13 Uprour caused tribe to leave old city (8)
15 Had any wide wheels placed out of sight (5,4)
16 Check one taken from site by motorway (4)
18 Silly crate rejected last night (4)
20 Conservative leader abandons argument - that's a change! (10)
22 Person responsible for buzzers (8)
24 Deserve backing of weary Frenchman (5)
26 Point to very good preserve for gourmet (7)
27 Oriental cooks tease sailors (7)
28 Distinguished egghead takes it to be an island (5,7)
- DOWN
3 Hollow-eyed witch has to pull up (7)
4 Check pipe overturned by animals (8)
5 Strong desire to drive (4)
6 Put down for a duel I'm hit badly (10)
7 Taking shower said what Queen should do (5)
8 City editor returns to it around mid-afternoon (7)
9 Stupidly decay broth as a source of food and energy (13)
10 Tracing Mini in crash thereby indicating guilt (13)
14 Golf scores sent round to filer's home (5,4)
17 Animal group order sheep to be raised first (8)
19 Sick fellow first to find fault (7)
21 National airs transposed by Samuel's teacher (7)
23 Wake up or take up exercise (5)
25 Finding bearing during service raised alarm (4)

The solution to last Saturday's prize puzzle will be published with names of winners on Saturday September 18.

Hugh Carnegie

EC's northern exposure

Wangles between Brussels and the Nordic countries over their applications to join the European Community are likely to be the subject of a growing number of newspaper reports in the next few months.

As negotiations get down to the toughest issues - particularly the demand for special treatment for the Arctic regions - doubts may be raised about whether agreement can be reached. From the EC point of view, a serious question remains: do the Nordic countries - Finland, Norway and Sweden - really want to join the Community?

There is no easy answer. Consider the following example: few harbours in Europe outside the English channel are as busy with passenger ships as Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Every day, liners with unlikely names like Cinderella manoeuvre in and out of the small port, dwarfing the rocky islands that guard the approaches.

Some head south for Tallinn, playing a fast-growing trade with Estonia. The biggest and sleekest glide westwards towards Stockholm. Some passengers on board are genuine travellers, preferring the overnight journey by sea to the high cost of flying around the Nordic region. But many are simply along for the cruise.

Finns, Swedes and Norwegians enjoy these Baltic jaunts chiefly because they can stock up on duty-free booze. Drink on board is a good deal cheaper than in their state alcohol monopolies.

The EC wants to break these monopolies. If it succeeds, the

price of drink on dry land would fall. But people are not cheering on the EC negotiators. Rather, the three Nordic governments are resisting such changes because of the political influence still wielded by their respective temperance movements.

Perhaps it is not such a paradox. In their different ways, the Finns, Norwegians and Swedes are proud and jealous of their way of life and the prosperous, welfare societies they have created against the climatic odds - even if the recession has put them under severe strain.

For instance, in Norway, fishing accounts for only a tiny proportion of gross domestic product and employs only a small fraction of the workforce. But fishing and the sea retain an unshakable place in the national identity. Fishing makes up, in the memorable metaphor of an adviser to Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, 30 per cent of political GDP. The issue of EC fishing quotas is, therefore, much more than just a question of fish stock management and fishermen's income.

Likewise, the argument that food would become cheaper and choice wider if protection and subsidy for Arctic and sub-Arctic farmers were dismantled, cuts little ice with a Nordic public that has traditionally been willing to pay a price for sustaining the population in remote areas. People do not understand why, as all three

countries would become net contributors to the EC budget, Brussels should not fund some of these subsidies just as it did for disadvantaged southern rural areas when they joined the Community.

Scepticism towards the EC in societies that are wary of outsiders has been reinforced by the recent disarray within the Community. Confronted by confusion over the Maastricht treaty, currency chaos, recession and, not least, the awful Yugoslav, public opinion has hardened against the Community, just as it has within many of the member countries.

If the Community were in a more upbeat phase, a Yes vote could be easy to attain

Opinion polls show the No camp in a clear lead in Norway and Sweden and, at best, only a fragile Yes vote in Finland. The three Nordic governments, particularly those in Oslo and Helsinki, are thus adopting a muscular pose in the negotiations. Each has promised to hold a referendum before making the final decision on accession, and they are worried that they will lose unless they are seen to have struck a hard bargain. Hence Mr Esko Aho, the Finnish prime minister, whose own rural based Centre party is divided over the EC, talks of the Community having to adopt a "northern approach".

In spite of such utterances, it could be a mistake for the EC to conclude that the Nordic countries do not really want membership. With the possible exception of Norway, it is hard to find senior policymakers,

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